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ABSTRACT

This study examined how different elementary school teachers learn to observe and make practical sense of what happens in their classrooms daily. The major focus of the study was on: (1) how teachers' ways of seeing are learned and how they change across years of experience in teaching and within each school year; (2) how what teachers come to notice and interpret in their classrooms may differ as a result of their experience in teaching in inner-city or suburban schools; and (3) how teachers' practical seeing-from-within-the action may differ from the more distanced observation patterns of intermittent visitors to the classroom. Those studied included experienced teachers, first-year teachers, and undergraduate majors. The first section of this report identifies the main themes of the study. The second section contains four case studies of experienced teachers who were observed and interviewed over an entire school-year, and case studies of four beginning teachers, and then compares the ways of seeing of beginning and experienced teachers. The final section of the report reviews the main themes from the case studies of the beginning and experienced teachers. A survey of conclusions is presented derived from the various case studies, and the implications of these findings for preservice and continuing teacher education are discussed. The implications of the findings for policy decisions regarding the nature of the work life and professional socialization of teachers are discussed. (JD)

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TEACHERS' PRACTICAL WAYS OF SEEING AND MAKING SENSE:

A Final Report

This project was a study of the practical and habitual observational activities of teachers--what they usually paid attention to as significant while they taught. The customary ways of seeing of experienced teachers in the early grades were compared and contrasted with those of inexperienced teachers in order to identify the teachers' patterned ways of noticing and making sense of everyday classroom events. The project also studied how the teachers acquired their distinctively professional ways of seeing and thinking.

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FORWARD

Overview of the Study

This has been a study of what teachers look and listen for while they teach. Its aims have been to discover how different teachers of the early grades learn to observe and make practical sense of what happens in their classrooms from day to day. Data collection in the study took place from Fall 1981 through Spring 1984. Data analysis continued through Summer 1985. Three issues have been of special interest in the study: (1) how teachers' ways of seeing are learned and how they change over time (across years of experience in teaching and within each year from September through June), (2) how what teachers come to notice and interpret in their classrooms may differ as a result of their experience in teaching in inner-city or suburban schools, and (3) how teachers' practical seeing-from-within-the action may differ from the more distanced observation patterns of intermittent visitors to the classrooms.

In focusing on these issues the project staff studied teachers who were at differing stages in their careers. The individuals we studied ranged in experience from veteran teachers through beginning first-year teachers to pre-beginners who were undergraduate education majors. Five experienced teachers were studied across an entire year of their teaching. Two of them were from a suburban school. They were studied in 1981-82. Three of the teachers were from urban, inner-city schools. One was studied in 1982-83 and that teacher was studied again with two others in

1983-84. We also studied four beginning teachers during their first year of full-time teaching, and seven undergraduate teacher education majors, one of whom was studied during student teaching.

The experienced teachers were studied by a combination of long-term participant observation, classroom videotaping, and interviewing. The inexperienced teachers were studied by interviewing. This was an in-depth study that yielded detailed case information. Because of practical limits on space, much but by no means all of that information is presented here.

Overview of the Report

This final report is divided into three sections. The first section identifies the main themes of the study. The second section is divided into two parts. The first part contains four case studies of the experienced teachers we observed and interviewed. These chapter-length case studies provide a rich and comprehensive portrayal of the customary patterns of attention of teachers while teaching.

The second part of Section II compares the ways of seeing of beginning and experienced teachers. It begins with a chapter based on interviews conducted throughout the first year in which four novice teachers began to teach full time. A second chapter is based on focused group interviews with the beginning teachers and the experienced teachers. During those interviews we asked the teachers to watch and comment on video footage of routine classroom events that was collected in a previous research project. That footage functioned as a kind of projective test; a common stimulus to which the different teachers reacted variously. We were then able to compare and contrast the comments of the beginning and the experienced teachers.

The third and final section of the report consists of summary, conclusions, and implications. It begins with a review of the main themes from the case studies of the beginning and experienced teachers. This is followed by a survey of conclusions derived from the various case studies and discussion of the implications of those findings for preservice and continuing teacher education. A second chapter discusses the implications of the findings for policy decisions regarding the nature of the work life and professional socialization of teachers.

SECTION ONE: MAJOR THEMES

Chapter 1

ISSUES OF SUBSTANCE:

MAIN THEMES OF THE STUDY

This chapter introduces the study and its major themes. First it considers the changes from the original research design and the themes in the original research questions. Then, as foreshadowing for the case studies that appear in Section Two, it introduces the major themes and conclusions that emerged from the empirical investigation. Throughout the chapter, the notion of pedagogical commitment and its influence on teacher's ways of seeing is emphasized.

Frederick Erickson

ISSUES OF SUBSTANCE:
MAIN THEMES OF THE STUDY

Changes from the Original Research Design

In the qualitative, interpretive approach to research taken here it is usual for certain features of emphasis to change during the course of the study. Most of our research questions remained the same throughout our work but there were three changes from the original research design that had substantive significance. The first change was the least substantive; it involved change from a longitudinal data base to a cross-sectional one.

The original design had called for longitudinal study of a group of undergraduate education majors who would be monitored throughout their undergraduate teacher education career and then on into their first years of teaching. This turned out to be logistically unfeasible for a variety of reasons. However, our study of different individuals at differing points in the teaching career--from undergraduate majors to teachers having an average of 12 years of full-time experience--provides cross-sectional data on which to base inferences about the development in teachers of increasingly experienced ways of attending to and making sense of everyday events in the classroom.

The second change from the original design was to avoid using student achievement on standardized tests as a measure of teacher effectiveness. As the study progressed it became apparent that comparable tests were not being used across our sample of school sites, which consisted of three differing public school districts and three differing independent schools. (It had become necessary to study three beginning teachers in independent schools because of the scarcity of positions for beginning teachers in central Michigan during the years of the study). In addition it became apparent during the course of the study that some of the teachers in our sample had differing pedagogical aims and definitions of effectiveness. Their fundamental notions of teaching and its effects differed enough that comparison according to end of the year standardized test scores seemed inappropriate.

Our finding that the various teachers' aims were in some regards incommensurable led to the third major change from the original research proposal, which was to add as a major topic of inquiry the issue of the teachers' implicit and explicit pedagogical commitments--their working philosophy of classroom teaching and learning. The differences between teachers in constitutive notions of the nature and aims of teaching and learning were most striking for the experienced teachers, who were also the teachers that were studied in greatest depth. Those differences were greater across individuals than across the two different types of settings studied, inner-city and suburban schools.

This unexpected finding led to a new line of emphasis in data analysis and reporting. Through analysis of the rich case study material available we attempted to make explicit the teachers' individual beliefs and values, many aspects of which were implicit, regarding the fundamental character and purpose of their daily pedagogical work. We also became interested in the ways in which the individual teachers' theories of their practice were related to implicit definitions of the work of teaching and of student learning that were communicated by the personnel of the school district and school building and that were also communicated in the district-mandated materials and standard operating procedures that became part of the teachers' routine classroom practice. The working philosophy that was manifested by each teacher--a combination of the pedagogical commitments held by the individual teacher and by the school system--seemed to have profound influence on what each teacher attended to and made sense of in the midst of the daily routines of classroom life.

Themes in the Original Research Questions

The project proposal assumed that distinctively "professional" ways of seeing and making sense would be evidenced by the teachers, and that the experienced teachers in the sample would show a more clear and more fully developed repertoire of ways of seeing than would the novice teachers. The emphasis in the study was on what teachers routinely noticed while they were teaching and what interpretive sense they made without deliberate reflection or critical scrutiny regarding what they could know through immediate perception.

The proposal also presumed that there would be three main sources of variation among the teachers in their ways of seeing and making sense: time (across the school year and across years of teaching experience), setting (urban or suburban school system), and instructional effectiveness. The proposal further presumed that teachers' immediate ways of seeing would differ from the views of classroom observers who were not themselves immersed in the action. It was assumed that classrooms were busy, information rich settings in which there were at any given moment many more bits of information available than the teacher could attend to, constrained as he or she was by human limits on information processing capacity. Seeing, hearing, and making sense were presumed to be selective and constructive; an active apprehension of information in the environment rather than a passive reception of it. These assumptions are reflected in the original research questions, which follow.

A. Do teachers' ways of seeing and making sense change across time? If so, how?

B. Do the practical ways of seeing used by teachers themselves differ in systematic ways from those used by observers who are external to the action and who do not exercise full authority as a teacher?

C. Are there apparent differences between inner-city and suburban teachers in ways of seeing and making sense?

D. Are there apparent differences between more and less instructionally effective teachers in ways of seeing and making sense? If so, what are they and how do ways of seeing seem to relate to differences in decision-making and in the conduct of instruction?

Themes in the Project's Findings

As a way of foreshadowing the case studies that appear in the second section of this report, let us consider some of the major conclusions and themes that emerged from the empirical investigation that was guided by these research questions. We can consider first the overarching questions regarding the selectivity of teachers' routine attention and interpretive sense-making. Before doing this, however, let us introduce the pseudonyms of the experienced teachers that were observed. Experience with these teachers provides the main body of evidence from which were derived the overall conclusions that are about to be discussed. Each of the teachers had at least ten years of classroom experience.

Suburban Teachers

Mrs. Smith (1982-83)

Mrs. Meijer (1982-83)

Urban Teachers

Mr. Fairley (1984, Winter -- Year I
1984-85 -- Year II)

Mrs. Tobin (1984-85)

Mrs. Gates (1984-85)

Theme: The Strategic Character of Practical Seeing. The teachers we studied saw what they needed to. They paid attention to those phenomena that seemed to them necessary to monitor, given the kind of pedagogical work they were involved in at the moment. "Seemed to them," in the previous sentence, is a phrase that is not intended to imply conscious reflection or deliberate strategy. All the experienced teachers we studied were highly strategic but were intuitively so in the ways they directed attention to what was going on around them. (Indeed the strategic press in the perceptions of the teachers is a major difference from the novice views of undergraduate interns and from the more sophisticated views of the researchers as well. The views of the experienced teachers differed especially from those of intermittent visitors in that even more so than the beginning teachers the experienced teachers zeroed in on phenomena across narrower ranges yet at at deeper levels of interpretation than did the intermittent visitors, who did not have the responsibility to keep the show running, and thus could step back from it more easily and look more broadly but more superficially at what was happening. There are costs as well as benefits inherent in the intensity of focus and interpretation that characterized the experienced teachers. These will be discussed in the final section of the report).

It may seem obvious to conclude that the teachers' conscious thoughts and their preconscious perceptions were motivated and not simply neutral. Our rediscovery of the intentionality of consciousness (or better, the intentionality of teachers' intuitions) is not trivial, however. The immediate perceptions and spur of the moment decisions of the teachers seemed to be organized by a process akin to that of triage in emergency medicine.

Triage refers to the tendency of battlefield medics and other emergency medical workers to respond first to the needs of those patients whose wounds are both serious and amenable to treatment. Thus the most extremely seriously wounded are likely to go untreated on the grounds that their case is hopeless and consequently medical resources, which are finite, should not be expended on them. The least seriously wounded also go untreated on the grounds that they can survive temporarily without treatment.

The teachers we studied seemed to attend most often to those phenomena in the classroom that seemed to invite or require some action by them that could have some positive effect. Such acts could be a response, a preventive move, or a decision. The teachers rarely attended to classroom phenomena out of general curiosity or in order to enjoy and appreciate what they saw and heard. Attention seemed to be used as a limited resource for pragmatic purposes. It was a kind of vigilance from which one did not often derive aesthetic pleasure, or a morally affirming sense of satisfaction in a job well done, or an empathic appreciation of the small triumphs and courageous attempts that were made by the students.

In short, for most of the teachers we studied, immediate seeing and making sense was not necessarily always unpleasant but it was rarely fun. In fact, for a few of the teachers it seemed never to be fun, although for some of the teachers some of the time it was intrinsically rewarding.

One can easily conceive how a triage-like pattern of focusing attention would be highly influenced by the teacher's pedagogical commitments--the body of examined and unexamined assumptions of what is necessary and right in the conduct of classroom teaching and learning. As one teacher's pedagogical commitments differed from another's so their customary ways of seeing and making sense differed.

Moreover, given an individual's pattern of pedagogical commitments, his or her patterns of attention and decision differed across various classroom activities. Not only what the teacher saw and heard, but the way in which the teacher used the senses of sight and hearing seemed to differ across such routine classroom activities as a reading lesson, using an overhead projector in a mini-lecture and discussion or having the class line up to leave the room. The differences in ways of seeing across differing classroom activities (i.e., across differing kinds of classroom work by the teacher) were patterned distinctively across the individual teachers, depending on their pedagogical commitments. In sum, not only as they did different kinds of classroom work but as they defined the nature of their work differently, and that of their students, the teachers paid attention to some qualitatively differing kinds of things (e.g. level of ambient noise, originality in a child's reasoning) as well as to some similar phenomena and then reasoned differently from the behavioral and physical evidence they perceived.

Theme: Ways of Seeing In and Across Time. Next let us consider the research questions concerning changes across time in teachers' ways of seeing and making sense. One aspect of this is a set of developmental issues; to what extent and in what ways does the immediate perception and interpretation of beginning teachers differ from that of experienced teachers?

There were differences between the novices and the experts in teaching, but these differences did not run along the lines predicted by the models of Fuller and others (see Fuller 1969). According to Fuller, the major difference between beginning and experienced teachers was the beginning teachers' concern with self

("How am I doing? Am I a success at this? Is it right for me?"), which contrasted with a concern for student learning that emerged later in the teaching career as the concerns with self began to be resolved ("How are they doing? What do they know? Where do they need to go next, intellectually?").

We found a different order of difference between the beginning and the experienced teachers than that identified by Fuller. The novices tended to look less comprehensively at classroom phenomena than did the more experienced teachers. Novices tended to look more at discrete actions of individual children and less at the emerging shape of the classroom society as a whole. They did not seem to "read off" where they were in the yearly progression through the curriculum against the backdrop of calendar time. An experienced teacher might ask herself a question such as "Now that it's January shouldn't we be farther along in math?" Beginners at teaching did not do this. Apparently since they did not have years of experience in getting through the school year, they did not read off their progress against the calendar as did the veteran teachers. The first-year teachers acquired a more comprehensive view of students and their behavior by the time spring had come. At that point they were making more connections and looking more at the class as a whole than they had done at the beginning of the year. Still, however, they did not seem to orient themselves in terms of a sense of the whole school year.

Some change in perspective occurred for the beginning teachers, but very little seemed to change in the perspectives of the experienced teachers. They did not seem to question their judgment about children or about how well this class was doing in comparison with classes from previous years. There seemed to be very little incentive for taking new perspectives on one's pedagogical work. The one exception to this was one of the inner city teachers, Mr. Fairley, whom we studied across two school years. In the second year of our work with him he had been transferred to a new school and all at the same time encountered a new set of children and families, a new principal, and a new basal reading series. His perspectives on teaching changed somewhat in that new situation, but his case was exceptional. Only one other teacher seemed to question her own judgements and perceptions. That teacher, Mrs. Gates, also taught in an inner-city school.

The other aspect of time that was related to changes in the teachers' practical ways of seeing has already been alluded to; differences across the calendar year. All the teachers conceived of their pedagogical work as changing in nature across the school year. Most of the experienced and inexperienced teachers saw the beginning of the year as a time to establish various classroom routines. A change in the direction of greater complexity of classroom tasks (and accordingly of student roles) began to happen after Thanksgiving. At that point the experienced teachers' patterns of attention changed as well. At the beginning of the year they were monitoring children's verbal and nonverbal compliance with the role expectations for various classroom routines, e.g. "Put your pencil under your book . . . I want to see all eyes up here." Later in the year the experienced teachers became more concerned with where children stood in the annual progression through the curriculum. Consequently the content of the students' academic work became more salient than (or at least as salient as) the form of the student's performance as a classroom citizen.

One of the second-grade teachers, Mrs. Meijer, said that January was the time when the class would "jell." Mrs. Smith, the second-grade teacher across the hall called it the time when some of the students "started to fly." Another of the teachers called it the time of "the big push." This was a time when collectively the class became organized and developed group morale around academic achievement. Mrs. Meijer was anxious during late January and the first week of February because she hadn't seen the class jell yet. Then it began to happen and she started to relax somewhat. Throughout the year, however, she was still a bit anxious and regretful because she felt that this year's class was not moving ahead academically as rapidly and as collectively as had other groups she had taught in previous years.

Time, as it progressed across the year, also influenced the teachers' ways of seeing in yet another way. As the school year progressed the teachers' sense of each child's institutional biography developed. The teacher would notice the child doing something, or not doing something done previously, and read off that behavior against a growing cumulative record of memories of the child across the year. After Christmas these "records," especially for those students with which the teacher was having difficulty, became more and more elaborated. Mentally, the teachers were keeping longer and longer lists on the children. As the list grew, a behavior of the moment was increasingly interpreted in terms of the gestalt of remembered past behaviors, rather than being considered de novo. By the end of the year there were few surprises in children's behavior, especially for the experienced teachers. This had benefits in that it made the complexity of children's differences more manageable conceptually. It had costs in that it became increasingly unlikely that the teacher would change his or her understanding of a child as the result of noticing a behavior that could be taken as disconfirming evidence of the child's overall "record". Thus the teachers seemed to be more and more sure of their judgments about children as the year progressed, and less and less open to rethinking their judgments because they had noticed a discrepant instance in the child's behavior that deviated from what the teacher had come to expect to see. In other words, the teachers' impressions of students became increasingly fixed as time went on.

Theme: Visitors' and Teachers' Ways of Seeing. Here we can consider the research questions regarding differences in ways of seeing between intermittent visitors to the classroom and teachers who lived in the classroom each day. There were some differences between these two kinds of observers and what they saw. The teachers observed from the midst of the action of classroom life and from the standpoint of one who possessed full authority over the students. There were two types of intermittent visitors, the undergraduate student interns and the participant observers, both of whom visited the classrooms a few days each week.

The main difference between the visitors and the full-time teachers was in the comprehensiveness of view taken regarding specific events and students. The teachers made many more connections among phenomena than did the visitors; connections across kinds of activities (what a student did in doing a workbook assignment as compared with what that child did in a soccer game on the playground) and across time (what the child was doing in September in comparison with December and February and in comparison with what an analogous child did across the school year two years ago). These connections made for a multi-layered backdrop against which the action of any individual or set of individuals in any given moment might be interpretively assessed. These interpretations were intimately local and finely nuanced. They seemed to influence immediate perception, such that one could say that the experienced teachers paid attention to very fine details of specific behavior and at the same time were very comprehensive in their interpretations of the significance of what they were seeing. They were able to do this very rapidly, as in using a "quick scan" to produce a behavioral snapshot of the momentary behavior of a particular student. The teachers remembered these behavioral snapshots vividly, recounting them later to the observers and connecting up a whole set of remembered snapshots across time.

All the observers, the visitors and the teachers alike, noticed especially students who were behaviorally salient and thus stood out from the crowd. Daisy Thomas, an experienced teacher who was part of the project staff, said that these were students who "point themselves out." The differences between visitors and teachers in ways of seeing such children lay in the sense that was made of them, and therefore on the behavioral details that were used as evidence in making interpretive connections. The teachers, as full-time residents in the classroom society, were able to make much more coherent sense of the behavior of salient children than could the observers.

This point can be illustrated by an example from the classroom of Mrs. Smith, one of the experienced suburban teachers. One day in October Mrs. Smith came to the participant observer and said, "Did you see how Sam took his paper plates?" (In fact, the observer had not noticed this incident at all, even though it happened right in front of him.) The children were making large flowers, each petal of which was a paper plate. As the observer watched and wrote notes, the students stood in line to get their batches of plates from the teacher. During the last few weeks the teacher had noticed that Sam, who she saw as highly competitive, had been completing only part of his seatwork assignments, or rushing through them and making obvious, careless mistakes. He was one of the most academically able boys in the room and his mother was an elementary school teacher. As the teacher watched him occasionally, using a "quick scan" while she was doing other things, she noticed that Sam speeded up in doing his seatwork as soon as a few other children began to turn theirs in (students took seatwork papers to the appropriate subject-matter filing baskets as soon as the papers were completed).

Until the teacher pointed out Sam's competitive behavior, the researcher had not noticed it. The teacher made the comment about the paper plates while standing with the researcher and watching Sam playing soccer during recess. She said to the observer, "Look at how he plays!" She said she had noticed how actively he played in team sports, and how he sometimes cried when his team lost. Apparently connecting all these observations, she saw Sam's way of standing in line to get his paper plates as another instance of his being pushy and competitive. She noticed this in connection with a perceived problem, "What can I do to get Sam to slow down and do his seatwork more carefully?" This was not a problem for the researcher, and he did not notice information relevant to it.

The views of the least experienced visitors, the undergraduate education majors, were most different from those of the most experienced teachers. Considering the previous example, an undergraduate student might not even have seen the behavioral indicators of impatience that the teacher saw as Sam stood in line. They were not obvious behavioral indicators, although once the paper plates snapshot had been discussed the participant observer was able to notice additional instances of Sam's impatience. Certainly an undergraduate student would not make so many connections across different kinds of events as did the teacher. The novice eyes of the undergraduate students seemed to see fragments of behavior of individual children, without putting the fragments into a more comprehensive interpretive framework and without seeing the relationship of many children's individual behaviors to the development of group and classroom level patterns of activity. Yet the undergraduates could, like the adult participant observers and the experienced teachers, notice those most salient children who "pointed themselves out."

The more experienced participant observers saw some of the same connections made by the teachers, and some connections that differed from those of the teacher but were of the same order, i.e. making connections from a child's performance across different subject matters or events, comparing and contrasting the activity of an instructional group across the main seasons of the school year.

Major differences in what the observers noticed and what the teachers noticed while teaching may have to do with differences in pedagogical commitments between the participant observers and the teachers. With the exception of one participant observer (Pelissier) all the other project staff had considerable experience in public school and/or university teaching. We brought our own pedagogical commitments to observation. In general, the observers were less sanguine about the use of published curriculum materials, especially in reading, than were the teachers (Mrs. Gates and Mr. Fairley being significant exceptions in this regard). The observers were much more sceptical than were most of the teachers about fundamental axiomatic assumptions that are current among teachers, e.g. that "ability" is a trait residing in students and can usually be assessed validly by teachers, that school ability varies widely in classrooms and is found in the population at large in something like a normal distribution, that a student's ability (in the sense of preparation) and current school performance is so powerfully influenced by the student's family situation that the teacher can have little positive influence if family conditions are not supportive of what the teacher is trying to do.

Doubts about axioms such as these led the researchers to take a stance to observation that could be called sympathetic revisionism, or sympathetic criticism. The position of the researchers was not value neutral. Yet the researchers identified with the teachers, seeing them as conscientious and, especially in the case of the experienced teachers, seeing them as skilled professionals.

In spite of their identification with the teachers the observers looked for some things in the classrooms that differed from what the teachers seemed to be after in their looking. The researchers tended to look for displays of competence and effort among certain children in places during the school day that the teacher did not, either because the teacher was not present, or because in running the whole show, the teacher's attention was directed elsewhere. The visiting observers were able to watch individual children for much longer strips of time than could the teachers. The result of the observers' looking often was to see more similarity between the so-called "low ability" and "high ability" children in the room than did the teachers, although to say this is a gross oversimplification. The observers saw what the teachers meant by "bright" and "slow," or "ready" and "not ready" but the observers were able to see a wider range of a student's classroom behavior than the teacher could. Partly this was because the observers were able to look at the student when for the teacher that child was "off camera," i.e. out of the teacher's focus of attention of the moment.

This is not to suggest that the observers' looking was any more systematic or objective than that of the teachers. Both sets of observers looked in subjective ways that were disciplined. The participant observers' looking was not constrained by the intensity of problem-focus and by the press of triage that we have described for the teachers. The classroom visitors had the advantage of being able to range more freely in their looking, but the asset of observational breadth was purchased at the cost of observational depth; lack of the special kind of analytic force that came from the teachers' immersion in the practical--in problem focus and triage.

One possible advantage held by the participant observers may have come from not being in the teacher's situation of immersion in the action. This was the opportunity to watch with great breadth as a result of being able to entertain more than one pedagogical commitment at a time. The researchers were able to sit back, as it were, and look at classroom life from various value positions; theoretical orientations and pedagogical commitments. It seemed that while teaching, the teachers maintained a single pedagogical commitment, and did so intuitively, without reflection. The teacher might consider differing commitments and interpretations after the fact, during an interview or during private reflection. While in the act of teaching, however, the teachers seemed to have viewed events from the standpoint of a single and fixed pedagogical commitment, as near as we could tell from what the teachers told us in interviews that they remembered about classroom events a few hours before.

A consequence of maintaining a single pedagogical commitment was that the teachers did not doubt what they thought they had seen and heard, while the participant observers were constantly doing that, and questioning their own interpretations. Classroom life seems so fast paced and the teachers, while in the act of teaching, seemed so committed to their working pedagogical theory, that they did not seem to question their perceptions or judgments. This may be adaptive in the short-term enactment of moment by moment teaching and decision-making, given the huge amount of information that is potentially available to process. It may be maladaptive for the longer term aim of developing the most accurate possible assessment of a child or of a classroom group. Some questions about their practice arose from the teachers themselves during the very gentle interviewing done by the researchers. What was striking, however, was that the teachers tended not to scrutinize their own perceptions critically, nor their pedagogical commitments, even though they might have expressed during interviews some second thoughts about the alternative strategic moves they chose at various points during the time under discussion in the interview.

The tendency, then, was for the teacher's way of seeing to be fixed; part of a self-sealing meaning system that was not available to self or to others for critical reflection. With a few exceptions the daily work life of the teachers seemed to be filled with practical action but relatively empty of praxis. There seemed in their work to be a paucity of experience, in the sense of Dewey's notion of it as a combination of practice and reflection upon it.

Theme: School Setting Influences on Ways of Seeing. The last of the sets of research questions to be considered by way of introduction are those regarding the influences of the school setting on teachers' ways of seeing and making sense. In the project proposal setting influences were conceived as related to differences between the work life of teaching in suburban and urban school systems. These differences were assumed to obtain mainly in the differing character of the student populations in both kinds of school system, in the differing scale of the school systems, and in differing formal organizational characteristics such as the degree of central control over curriculum, the relative availability of supplementary materials and services for students and teachers, and the numbers and influence of mid-level administrators.

One of the unexpected findings was that the teachers studied did not seem to differ regularly in ways of seeing across the two kinds of school districts, urban and suburban. Rather, the teachers differed in ways of seeing more according to pedagogical commitments, and these did not differ across the suburban sample and the urban sample of teachers. Admittedly, the numbers of full-time teachers studied is small; five experienced and four beginning teachers. Moreover, three of the beginning teachers taught in independent schools, none of which was like an urban public school, and the one beginning teacher in a public school taught in a suburban district. Thus there is no information on beginning teachers in inner-city schools, which are considered by many to be the most stressful conditions for beginning to teach.

It is nonetheless interesting that the differences among teachers in seeing and making sense seemed to be related more to individual differences in those teachers' pedagogical commitments than to the urban or suburban character of their students and their school setting.

This is not to say that there were no differences at all between the city and suburban teachers. These differences seemed relatively slight, however, involving matters of degree rather than of kind. The thresholds of tolerance for levels of ambient noise and classroom fidgeting were lower for the suburban teachers than for the urban teachers. The suburban teachers' classroom groups looked slightly more orderly, in the traditional sense of the term, than did the students of the urban teachers.

The classrooms were quite similar across school districts, however, in the pedagogical commitments that were for the most part held and enacted by the teachers. As already noted, Mrs. Gates and Mr. Fairley, two of the three teachers in urban schools, were somewhat exceptional in this regard, but even in their classrooms for much of the school day patterns occurred that resembled those to be sketched briefly below.

In both the urban and the suburban districts much of the curriculum was centrally mandated and there was much use of already prepared materials--texts and accompanying workbooks, dittoed worksheets. In all classes students were grouped by achievement for reading but not for mathematics. In the suburban classrooms there was an especially wide range of achievement, with some of the second grade students reading at the seventh and eighth-grade level. During the middle of the year in the two suburban classrooms an extensive writing project was conducted by the teachers, and this was not mandated centrally. Yet in one of the urban classrooms, Mr. Fairley's in Year I, the students did considerable writing and there were many more children there performing below grade level, and fewer performing above grade level. Of all the classrooms, Mr. Fairley's in Year I was the one characterized by the most student time spent on projects that went beyond the mandated curriculum or served as alternatives to it. Mrs. Gates, another urban teacher, was next in the amount of time spent on reading and mathematics activities that supplemented the mandated curriculum. In the classrooms of Mrs. Tobin, the third of the three urban teachers, and for Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Meijer, who taught in suburban classrooms, students spent much of their time using the materials supplied by the school districts. The students worked hard in all the rooms. Yet most of their work was done using prescribed materials that stressed short-answer responses to various kinds of questions about facts.

For the most part the teachers accepted the materials and curriculum guides presented to them. With the exception of

Mr. Fairley during Year I and Mrs. Gates, the teachers did not seem to see it as good or right to take students beyond or around the curriculum as it was prescribed. This seems to have been a value decision, however implicit, on the teachers' part. It seemed not simply that the teachers found this less work than to swim against the institutional currents that flowed through the school and through their classroom. The teachers worked hard; they put much effort into problems that they cared about. But for most of the teachers the prescribed curriculum did not seem to be a major problem for their teaching and for students' learning.

Thus the mandated materials and procedures that went with the materials were a powerful setting influence on the teachers' actions and choices regarding actions, how they conceived of student work, and what they paid attention to and made interpretive sense of. Setting influences seemed to become most powerfully alive in the classrooms through the medium of the instructional materials that were used.

The power of mandated materials and procedures as setting influences is illustrated especially by the example of Mr. Fairley's teaching in Year II. He had been studied the previous year when he was at a school in which he had taught for some years. At that school he had become closely acquainted with the families of students, and had developed many curriculum units and activities that supplemented the mandated materials. In interviews he expressed strong convictions in the importance of encouraging children to reason and to be curious--to go beyond the information given, invent new solutions, and seek new questions.

He thought that much of the assigned drill found in published materials was unecessary; he saw children's isolated academic skills as following understanding rather than preceding it and building up to it.

The social and pedagogical organization of learning activities in his room during Year I manifested Mr. Fairley's beliefs. Students were encouraged to work on their own at open-ended tasks. The reading groups in his room were achievement ranked but his was the only room observed in which children were not asked to read aloud in the reading groups. Rather, at all skill levels, most of the group time was spent discussing the selections from the texts. The students read selections from a range of texts, multiple copies of which Mr. Fairley had collected over the years.

Mr. Fairley's teaching and pedagogical commitments during the first year he was studied were atypical for the urban district, which had some years before adopted highly centralized mandates for curriculum and instruction, measuring student achievement on tests of prescribed sequential objectives. In Year II his teaching looked a bit more typical for that district. This was most true for his reading instruction.

At the beginning of the second year that Mr. Fairley was studied the district adopted a uniform reading series for all classrooms in the early grades. The basal texts were accompanied by workbooks and by frequent tests of the student skills that were sequentially presented in the materials. These tests were given at prescribed intervals and the results, unit by unit, were catalogued and reported for each teacher by the district's central evaluation unit. This was an instructional management system designed to permit no escape by teachers. Mr. Fairley found himself in a new pedagogical situation with the new reading series. In addition, his former school had been closed, and he had been transferred, at his request, to the school where most of the students from the old neighborhood were being sent. But those were a small minority of his new students; most came from families and neighborhoods with which he was not familiar. He had a new principal; one who had been a leader in "teacher effectiveness" training in the district, an approach to teaching that differed greatly from Mr. Fairley's pedagogical commitments.

Mr. Fairley adapted to these circumstances by using the new reading series in a way much closer to that recommended in the teacher's manual than he had done the previous year when he had used the old reading series. He still stressed comprehension over skill drill but students spent more time on worksheets from the workbook and less on independent reading and writing assignments. In classroom discussion and in reviewing student's written work Mr. Fairley did not look as much as in Year I for evidence of student interests and new ideas.

In both years students in Mr. Fairley's room had spent much time on task. The nature of the curricular tasks changed, however, under the influence of new materials and a new teaching situation. Not only did the students' work change; so did the nature of Mr. Fairley's pedagogical work and his ways of seeing and making sense in accomplishing that work. This example illustrates the profound framing influence of the wider institutional setting on teachers' patterns of observation and interpretation. It is not a contrast across differing types of school districts, or across student populations that differed much in socioeconomic status, race and ethnicity, or even across differing types of teachers. It is a change across setting conditions for one individual teacher, the most powerful new influence on whom seems to have been the newly mandated materials that redefined the nature of daily academic work in a single subject matter area.

Summary

This chapter has the study and major themes from the study have been reviewed: the strategic character of teachers' ways of seeing, changes in teachers' ways of seeing across the time of the school year and across years of experience in teaching, differences between visitors' and classroom teachers' ways of seeing, and some influences of the school setting on what teachers notice and how they make interpretive sense of it. Throughout the chapter the discussion has emphasized the notion of pedagogical commitment and its influence on teachers' ways of seeing. This notion was not explicitly anticipated in the set of guiding research questions that were framed in the original project proposal. It emerged as significant during the course of data collection and analysis. The notion of pedagogical commitment proved to be a thread by which the studies of experienced and inexperienced teachers could be connected; an analytic construct according to which the ways of seeing and making sense of all the different teachers could be compared and contrasted. In the next sections of the report the teaching and the strategic practices of observation and inference used by the various teachers will be described in sets of case studies.

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SECTION TWO: CASE STUDIES

Chapter 2

CASE STUDY OF A SUBURBAN TEACHER:
MAKING DECISIONS ABOUT STUDENTS' SPECIAL NEEDS

This case study focuses on one teacher's ways of seeing children in her class with regard to special needs that they might have in the areas of learning or behavior. The chapter begins with an introduction to the study. Next, it considers the findings which examine the teacher's decision making, changes in her ways of seeing once she had referral in mind, and how she made connections across different kinds of phenomena before she made a referral. The chapter ends with a discussion of the conclusions.

Brenda Lazarus

Exerpted from Practical Reasoning and Observation: A Second-Grade Teacher Refers Children for Special Education Services.

CASE STUDY OF A
SUBURBAN TEACHER

Introduction to the Study

Elementary teachers routinely engage in setting children apart within their classrooms. There are programs for gifted children, for remedial readers, for children who are artistically or musically inclined, for student leaders, for student helpers, and for children in need of special education. Throughout the course of a normal school year, a teacher may be called upon to make decisions about all or most of the above. This places the teacher in the position of being the one who decides who gets in to programs and who does not. In this sense a teacher is a "gatekeeper" (Erickson and Shultz, 1982), as well as an instructor.

The purpose of this study was to examine the way an experienced second grade teacher made decisions about children in her class with regard to any special needs that they might have in the areas of learning or behavior. These special needs were of a persistent, long-term nature that extended beyond the transient, temporary problems that bother many children during a school year, but do not continue to hamper their academic or social growth. These special needs may result in a teacher making the decision to refer a particular child for special education services. The teacher sees these special needs as requiring intervention above and beyond the assistance she can provide within the regular classroom.

What is there about a child that sets him or her apart in such a way that the child's teacher considers a special education referral as an alternative (or an additional) setting to her class? The teacher in this study had daily contact with twenty-four children. At the beginning of the year none of the children were in special education programs, excluding speech therapy. By the end of the year the teacher had made two referrals for special education services and had considered doing so for two other children. How does a teacher decide whom to refer and whom not to refer? Did the two children who were referred have characteristics that were not present in the other children in the room? What did the teacher learn about the other two targeted children that led to her not pursuing possible special education placement for them? What about other children who were troubling to the teacher but were never even mentioned for referral? These are some of the questions upon which this study was predicated.

The way children are set apart for special education by a teacher has not been looked at before at such a microscopic level. The process of how students get into special education has been investigated by Mehan and his associates (Mehan et al., 1981b) but not at the same level or with the same set of the guiding questions. They studied the issue of special education placement beginning at the special education placement committee meetings. The placement committee meeting is an important step, but only one in a series of gates that lead to special education placement within most school districts. Before a placement committee can enact a routine (Mehan, 1984) a student first has to be brought to the attention of such a committee. The child's regular classroom teacher is often the first to bring a child to the attention of such a group. It is at this point that the teacher's skill in practical reasoning and observation takes on great significance. The regular class teacher thus opens the first gate into special education (see Figure 1).

When a regular education teacher makes a decision to refer a child to special education there is a great deal more involved than meets the eye. The significance of the interactions that occur within the classroom context cannot be overlooked. This year-long participant observational study of one second grade classroom made it clear that each and every school year has its own uniqueness. This is true even if the teacher has taught the same grade for a number of years. The interactions that occur between the teacher, the children, the curriculum, and the materials, are intricately woven together each school year in a pattern that makes sense to those involved. The experienced teacher looks for signs of reoccurring patterns familiar from previous years. Children of interest are more or less important as objects of the teacher's observations as she looks for telltale signs of problems, but it seems that each class has its own special and unique qualities. What factors enter into teachers' ways of seeing particular children who trouble them? The importance of early intervention with handicapped children is well known to educators, but they are still reluctant to label a child

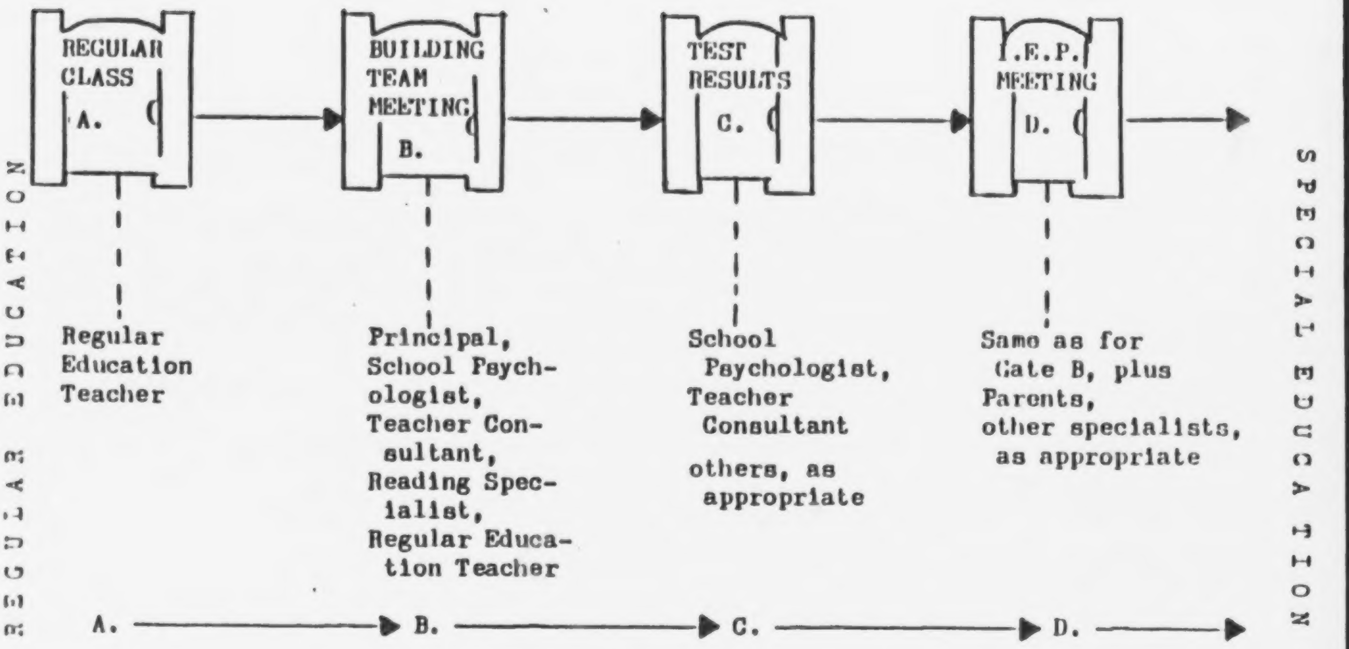

REGULAR EDUCATION
REGULAR CLASS
A.
BUILDING TEAM MEETING
B.
TEST RESULTS
C.
I.E.P. MEETING
D.
Regular Education Teacher
Principal, School Psychologist, Teacher Consultant, Reading Specialist, Regular Education Teacher
School Psychologist, Teacher Consultant
others, as appropriate
Same as for Gate B, plus Parents, other specialists, as appropriate
A.
B.
C.
D.
SPECIAL EDUCATION

Figure 1: Gates and gatekeepers into special education.

as a special education student. Checklists of behavioral characteristics have been developed to aid classroom teachers in their recognition of the early signs of learning and behavior problems, but the observations and practical reasoning of the teacher doing the referral are not reflected in most of these forms.

This study focused on one of the many routine sorting decisions of a classroom teacher. The research question of interest in the study was, what factors are responsible when a second grade teacher identifies children as being in need of special education? Three sets of questions guided the study. The first set dealt with the observations of the teacher in the first days and weeks of the school year that alerted her to possible special needs in certain children. The second set had to do with what types of teacher observations and practical reasoning took place once a certain child was targeted by the teacher. The final set of guiding questions was formed after the teacher in the study had referred two children for special education services. This third set was developed in an attempt to understand why the teacher had referred these two children and not other children who had problems as well.

Research Plan

Given the nature of the research questions and the in-depth understanding of the phenomenon that was desired, I felt that a year-long fieldwork study would be the most appropriate and best way to gain these insights. Interpretive participant observation (Erickson, 1985) was used to gather data for this study. It is already known that most referrals for special education in the high incidence areas such as learning disabilities and emotional impairment are done by the classroom teacher. What is not known is how the classroom teacher goes about deciding whom to refer and whom not to refer. The research tools of the ethnographic or fieldwork method have been adapted to education from the disciplines of anthropology and sociology. It was felt that these procedures, increasingly more prominent in educational research, would be the most appropriate to use in trying to discover how the classroom teacher sets children apart for special education referral.

Extensive on-site participant observation was carried out. This involved the often difficult task of finding the right blend between observing and participating in the activities of the class. I was present in the classroom almost every day from the first day of the 1981-82 school year through the month of October. After that, the classroom was visited two or three times per week through December. From January through the second week in April (Spring Break), I was present once or twice a week. From mid-April until the close of the school year on June 17, contact was maintained with the teacher by means of the telephone and periodic visits. Care was taken to be present at particularly crucial times during the year as identified by both the teacher, previous researchers, and myself. In all, site visitations were made on sixty-two different days, eleven of which were full days and the rest half days. This amounted to approximately three hundred twelve hours of on-site observation.

Observation was focused on the classroom teacher and the objects of her attention. At first, student interaction was noted primarily as it appeared to have a relationship to what the teacher was seeing. Later, the interactions of specific children who were identified as potential candidates for special education referral were more closely observed, even if the teacher's attention was elsewhere. During the periods of participant observation, extensive fieldnotes were taken and documents pertinent to what was happening in the classroom were collected. These documents included student assignments, bulletins to go home, district policy booklets, and so forth. Fieldnotes were gathered during the classroom visits (Schatzman and Strauss, 1977, see pages 94-101). Over 460 pages of footnotes comprise the written data base.

Periodic interviews were held with the teacher in order to gain insight into her ways of interpreting and to confirm or disconfirm the researcher's inferences with supporting evidence reflecting the position of the teacher-informant. For the most part the interviews took place during the teacher's lunchtime. On several occasions interview data were gathered during recess, in the car on the way to lunch at a local restaurant, at the restaurant, and after school. The format that worked best with the teacher in this case was that of an informal interview rather than a structured formal interview. I prepared a few specific questions about observations and ideas of interest to me and interspersed these as they seemed appropriate. It was not difficult to get the teacher to express her feelings about events and specific children in the classroom. Her openness in the interviews provided an excellent source of data. She made it easy for me to check inferences without having to do much probing. Each interview was audiotaped and ten interviews were completed that span the course of the school year.

Videotaping of classroom events, the teacher, and specific target children was done in an attempt to capture what she was seeing as she went about her day-to-day teaching, as well as the specific behavior of the target children. On several occasions the teacher specifically asked for certain activities (the opening of the school day) and specific children (Pammy during seatwork) to be filmed. These were viewed and discussed afterwards. I felt that the use of videotape would enhance both the teacher's recall of her cognitive processing at the time of the action, and allow me to study the context of incidents that might become salient at a later date. This method was particularly useful later in the year when the target children had been identified as it allowed me to go back to the early videotapes and watch the behavior of the identified children. At the beginning of the year the camera was placed on a tripod in the front corner of the room, behind the teacher's desk (see Figure 2). From this angle it was possible to tape the class from nearly the same perspective the teacher had

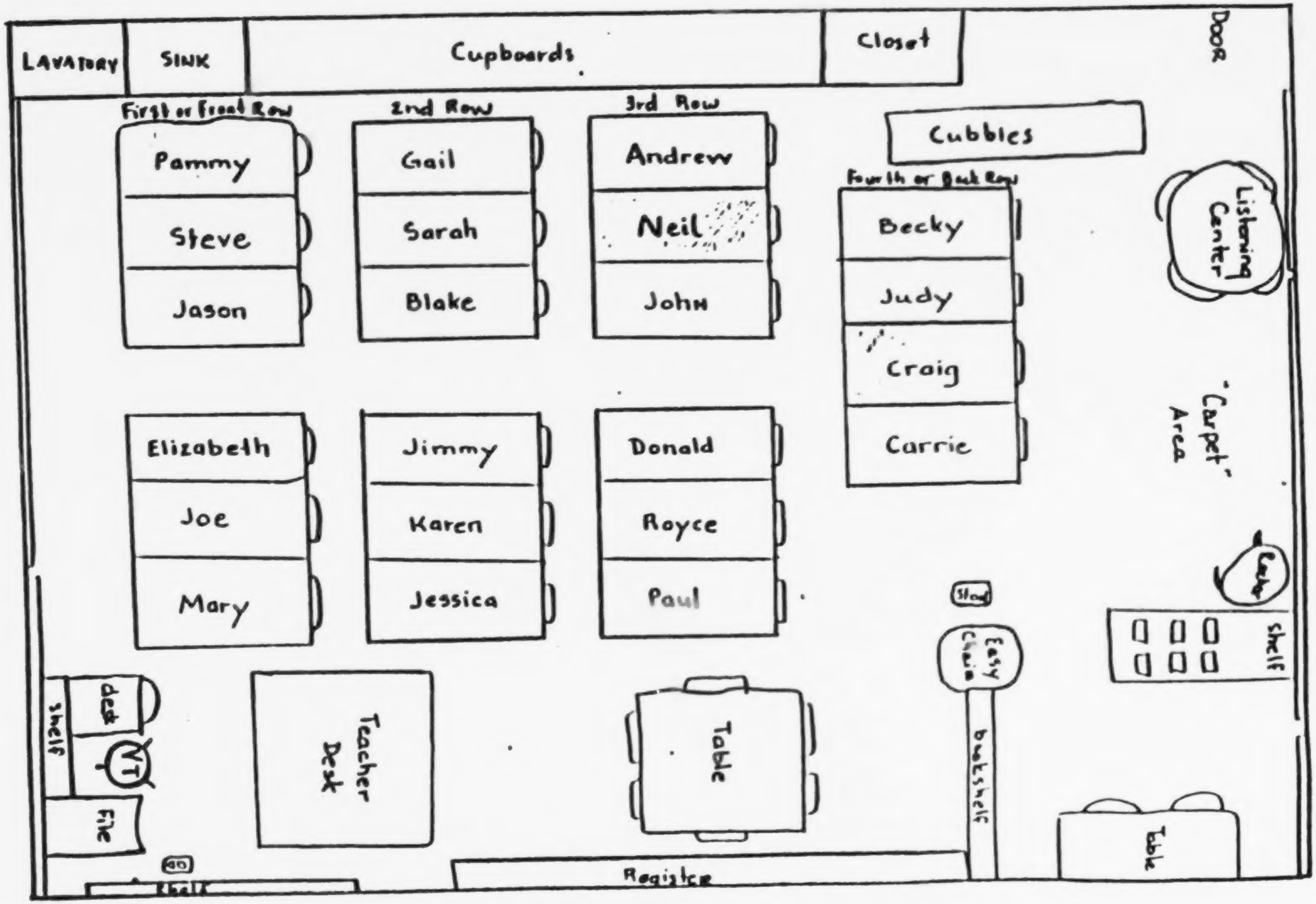

LAVATORY
SINK
Cupboards
Closet
DOOR
First or Front Row
2nd Row
3rd Row
Cubbies
Fourth or Back Row
Pammy
Steve
Jason
Gail
Sarah
Blake
Andrew
Neil
John
Becky
Judy
Craig
Carrie
Listening Center
"Carpet" Area
Elizabeth
Joe
Mary
Jimmy
Karen
Jessica
Donald
Royce
Paul
Stool
Easy Chair
Rocker
shelf
desk
shelf
VT
File
Teacher Desk
Table
bookshelf
Table
Register
Shelf

Figure 2: Room arrangement--September 1981.

B-10

when she addressed the children from her desk. A wide-angle lens was used to include as many children as possible at one time, but the camera was too close to the children to get all of them in view at once. Later in the year, a zoom lens was used to focus on specific children and events of interest. In all, nineteen hours of videotape are included in the data corpus.

Selected pieces of videotape were used on four occasions in viewing sessions with the teacher (Erickson & Schultz, 1977). The teacher and I watched the tape together. Sometimes I would stop the tape and ask the teacher to recall what she was seeing or thinking about at that particular point in the tape. Sometimes she asked me to stop the tape at places she wanted to elaborate upon or to see again. The viewing sessions were audiotaped and later coded and analyzed.

At the beginning of the study permission slips for participation were sent home to the parents of each child in the room (see Appendix C). The letter explained that the children might be asked to wear a vest that contained a cordless radio-microphone for a period of time. The purpose of the vest was to capture the words of specific children on the videotape. By the end of the study each child in the room had an opportunity to wear the vest at least twice. This made it possible to have all the children on tape under the assumption that if one or more were referred for special education I would not have to call undue attention to them. This method also provided videotapes of contrast, or benchmark, sets of children that were later studied in comparison with the target children. To make the vest wearing less obtrusive two vests were used. One vest contained a "dummy" microphone. The children thought that I was recording both children wearing vests. A pocket was sewn on the back of a blue denim vest and the radio-microphone was placed inside it (see Figure 3). The microphone cord was slipped under several flaps of elastic sewn on the vest at strategic points and came over the shoulder where it was clipped to another piece of elastic close to the wearer's mouth. The antenna cord was taped down at several places on the back of the vest with electrician's tape. The children enjoyed wearing the vest and eagerly requested their turns. There was an expected amount of "testing" of the microphone each time a child wore a vest. The vest wearing sometimes proved disruptive to the class,

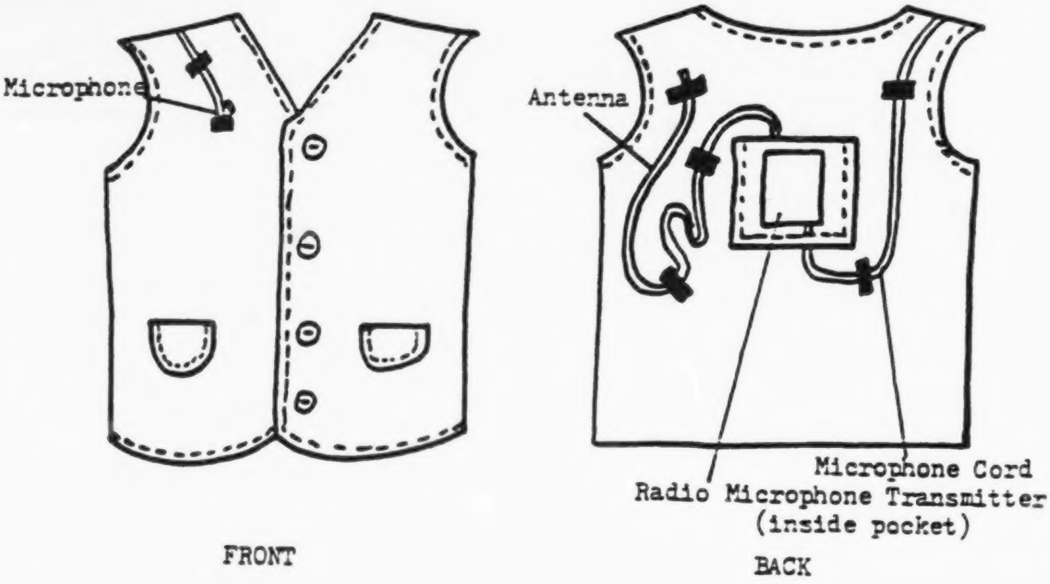


Figure 3: Recording vest with radio microphone.

but for the most part it was quickly forgotten after a few minutes and the children and teacher went on with their regular activities.

In summary, the interpretive participant observation method was used to gather the data for this study. The techniques used by the researcher were: 1) gathering field notes during observations in the classroom; 2) videotaping the teacher and children who were the subjects of the study; 3) audiotaping interviews between the teacher and the researcher; 4) audiotaping viewing sessions between the teacher and the researcher to discuss what appeared on the videotapes; and 5) gathering documents pertinent to classroom happenings.

Analysis

A four-faceted approach was used to obtain and analyze the data from the study. The four strategies used were watching, listening, recording, and analyzing (see Chapters 4-7, Schatzman & Strauss, 1973). In an ethnographic study the analysis of data begins while the researcher is still gathering data. Analysis is integrated with the other three fieldwork strategies. The data obtained from the different methodological processes were compared and contrasted using a technique known as "triangulation" (Gorden, 1980, p.12). In this process, what has been learned from one data source is cross-checked for validity with what has been learned from the other sources. An example of this procedure follows: The teacher made a statement in an interview about a certain classroom management procedure she used. In this specific case it was a behavior modification technique. I examined the fieldnotes for instances of the procedure being used and viewed the videotapes for further occurrences of the use of the procedure by the teacher. If the teacher was seen using the procedure on videotape and at other times it had been noted in the fieldnotes that she used the procedure, the evidence strongly supports her interview statement. Instances of disconfirming evidence as well as confirming evidence were sought in order to help the researcher make a stronger argument for hypotheses that have been made (Erickson, 1979).

The next step was to look for classes of things, persons, and events in an attempt to discover key linkages between the phenomena occurring in the classroom (Schatzman & Strauss, 1973). It was within the key links that the overriding model for the research developed and the theoretical constructs emerged. This process is not static. That is, the classes may change and key linkages may shift or lead to new theoretical areas that necessitate further reading of the literature and analyses. All of this was not done in a vacuum. Central to an interpretive participant observational study is cross-checking with the teacher-informant to keep the process constructually valid. Additionally, communication with knowledgeable colleagues regarding the theoretical issues that were shaping the analysis helped me clarify the guiding constructs and focus on the key linkages.

Once the key linkages were set and the theoretical constructs were researched, the next layer of data analysis began. This consisted of the often tedious process of organizing and sifting through the data bases. Instances from the fieldnotes were color-coded around issues and children. Audiotapes and videotapes were transcribed and color-coded as the fieldnotes had been. A modification of Erickson and Shultz's (1977) procedures for analyzing videotapes was used once the children and events of interest were defined. I developed catalogs to help me know where to find certain types of information in the fieldnotes.

After two children had been referred for special education I selected instances of their classroom interactions from the videotapes and made a master videotape of each child. When I made the master tapes I used a Date-Time-Generator to record the actual school date and running time (in minutes, seconds, and tenths of a second) on the videotape copy for each event selected. Vignettes were written after carefully watching the master videotapes and cross-checking my fieldnotes for any off-camera interactions of importance.

Prior to evaluating the current study the reader is cautioned that the research methodology chosen has a number of underlying assumptions that will be stated before the results are presented. Of primary importance is the antireductionist belief that the whole cannot be understood by examining its parts separately. The approach is also predicated on humans being able to know themselves and being able to accurately express their feelings about what they have done. From this follows the assumption that people have the capacity to pay attention to the meanings of their actions, to rapidly organize and simplify events, and to take on complex social roles. Fourth, it is assumed that most behavior is purposively constructed and cannot be understood without knowing its meanings and purpose. The final assumption of participant observational research has epistemology, the art of knowing, at its core. It is the belief that the subjective view of reality is both accessible and functional. It is possible to find out what a person meant by viewing his or her actions or listening to his or her words. The participant observational approach to research has understanding as its primary goal, placing understanding above predictability and control, the goals of some other types of research in education.

A complete description of the setting and subjects of the study will be presented in the next section. The purpose of this is to help the reader start to understand how the research questions, methodology, analysis and assumptions all blend together.

Setting

In this section I set out to transport the reader to the actual classroom that was studied. While this, of course, is not physically possible, it may be mentally and emotionally possible to come close to being there through descriptions. First, I describe the school district, the school, and the classroom that was studied. Second, an overview of the major happenings of the school year is presented from the teacher's point of view. The teacher of the classroom is described next. Following this, a "typical" day in the classroom is reviewed. Fifth, the children in the classroom are discussed as a group and finally, the special education referral process used at the school will be described. These are the essential pieces of background information that may minimally allow the reader to be a part of the 1981-82 school year in this second grade classroom.

District, School, and Classroom

The school used in the study is located in a small mid-Michigan community of approximately thirty thousand people. The Seneca School District (fictional name) is in close proximity to a major state university, the state capital, and a major division of a large automaker. The community could be described as a "bedroom community." Its residents work primarily in one of the above endeavors. The community is beginning to change because a new shopping center and new businesses have been built in the district. Seneca School District also includes parts of two townships that are more rural in nature.

The district has grown steadily since it was consolidated in 1923. The classroom being studied is at the Pawnee School, one of four elementary schools serving the district. A one-story school, Pawnee was built in 1955 and has since been renovated to include a media center, a multi-purpose room and counseling areas. The district has one middle school for grades six through eight and one high school, noted statewide for its excellence. The residents of the Pawnee School attendance area are very stable. The majority of the children spend their entire elementary school career in this one school. This is not true of all the elementary schools in the district, however.

Pawnee School houses almost three hundred children and contains two classes at each grade level from kindergarten through fifth. In addition to the eleven classroom teachers there are full-time teachers for music, physical education, and remedial reading. There is a half-time special education resource room teacher, a part-time speech therapist, and a part-time school counselor. The school is served by a school psychologist and school social worker as needed. These specialists meet regularly with the building team to discuss any children of concern to the teachers.

The two second grade classrooms are located across from each other at the far northern end of the corridor in the original building. On the wall outside the classroom door was a poster of Snoopy (the wise beagle of Charles Shultz's "Peanuts" cartoon strip) lying on top of his doghouse saying, "Relax. Second Grade Is a Breeze." Each child's desk was labelled with his or her name and a picture of Snoopy. Snoopy was the theme for this year's class. The children's art work filled the room bulletin boards and hung from two wires the teacher had strung from the front to the back of her room.

The way the desks were arranged and the children's positions in the desks changed frequently throughout the year. Sometimes the children's desks were in horizontal rows, sometimes they were in groups of four to ten, and sometimes the desks were alone. At the end of the year the desks were all together in a big U shape. The teacher had a desk and a four-drawer file cabinet for some of her materials. Besides the children's individual desks (see Figure 2) the room also contained an area for free reading with a small table and two chairs. This area was formed by using a bookshelf and another, wider shelf to set it apart in one corner. On top of the shelf were wire baskets where children filed their completed work. There was a rocking chair and an easy chair with a footstool in the large open area at the back of the room. This area was used for small group time, story time, show and tell, and other such activities. The listening center was located to the side of the large open area. It consisted of a round table with four chairs. There was a record player, a cassette tape recorder, and several headphones on top of it. There was a basket full of records and tapes that children were allowed to listen to when their work was completed. There was a compartmentalized, double-sided piece of furniture known as the "cubbies" near the door. Each child was assigned a cubby space. The children kept their lunches, paint shirts, gym shoes, and various other items in these spaces. The teacher kept a paper cutter, a box of spelling group materials, and some clipboards on top of the cubbies. There was also a set of smaller cubbies by the door that was used as mailboxes. Notices to go home, homework, and awards were placed in these boxes by a helper or the teacher and the children were to take their mail as they left for home at the end of the day. The room contained a sink and lavatory in another corner. There were storage cupboards and a teacher closet along the western wall. Scissors, glue, scrap paper, and rulers were left out on top of the counter for children to use.

Room 125 was very much a reflection of what the children were working on that particular day and time. It was a room that looked lived-in. Children's work was hung, pinned, and stapled all around. It was also apparent on the first day of school that the majority of these children knew a great deal about how to go to school. They entered the room, took their seats, remembered to raise their hands without being reminded, and got out their pencils, books, and other needed supplies.

Prior to beginning the field study in Room 125 Mrs. Meijer told me that there would be frequent changes in the seating arrangement. From September to June thirteen changes were recorded in the fieldnotes. Many of them were major reorganizations. I spent so much time looking at the mundane issue of seating arrangements for several reasons. First, the arrangements were made with a stated rationale on her part. Second, these changes generally tended to set children apart from the main body of activity. Finally, the seating arrangements can be used as visual evidence to show what happened to certain groups of children in terms of their movement in the class as the year progressed.

When I looked at the seating charts for the beginning and end of the school year several physical factors were noticeable. The opening of school seating arrangement (see Figure 2) is very ordered. There are six groups of three children and one group of four children, all facing the same direction and lined up in straight rows. To the teacher a row consisted of the two groups of three desks next to each other; thus there were four rows, with Row 4 consisting of only four children in one set. The row closest to the chalkboard where the daily assignments were written was referred to as the front row, or the first row. The rest were called the second, third, and fourth or back row. The back row was the row of four desks closest to the door. The teacher's desk was at the far front corner, facing the children and in a diagonal line with the door.

Looking at the seating chart for the end of the year (see Figure 4) it can be seen that the teacher had moved all the children's desks in to a U shape. She had moved the front of the class to the chalkboard by the door and had moved her own desk to this end of the room, but in the same position-facing the children and the door. She had reversed the focal-point of the room. The U consisted of six desks next to each other forming each leg of the U. Five desks formed the base of the U. Four children's desks were placed inside the U. These four children were each opposite another child on the U. The U shape reflected the coming together of the class at the end of the year. They had "jelled" enough to be seated in one large block of desks.

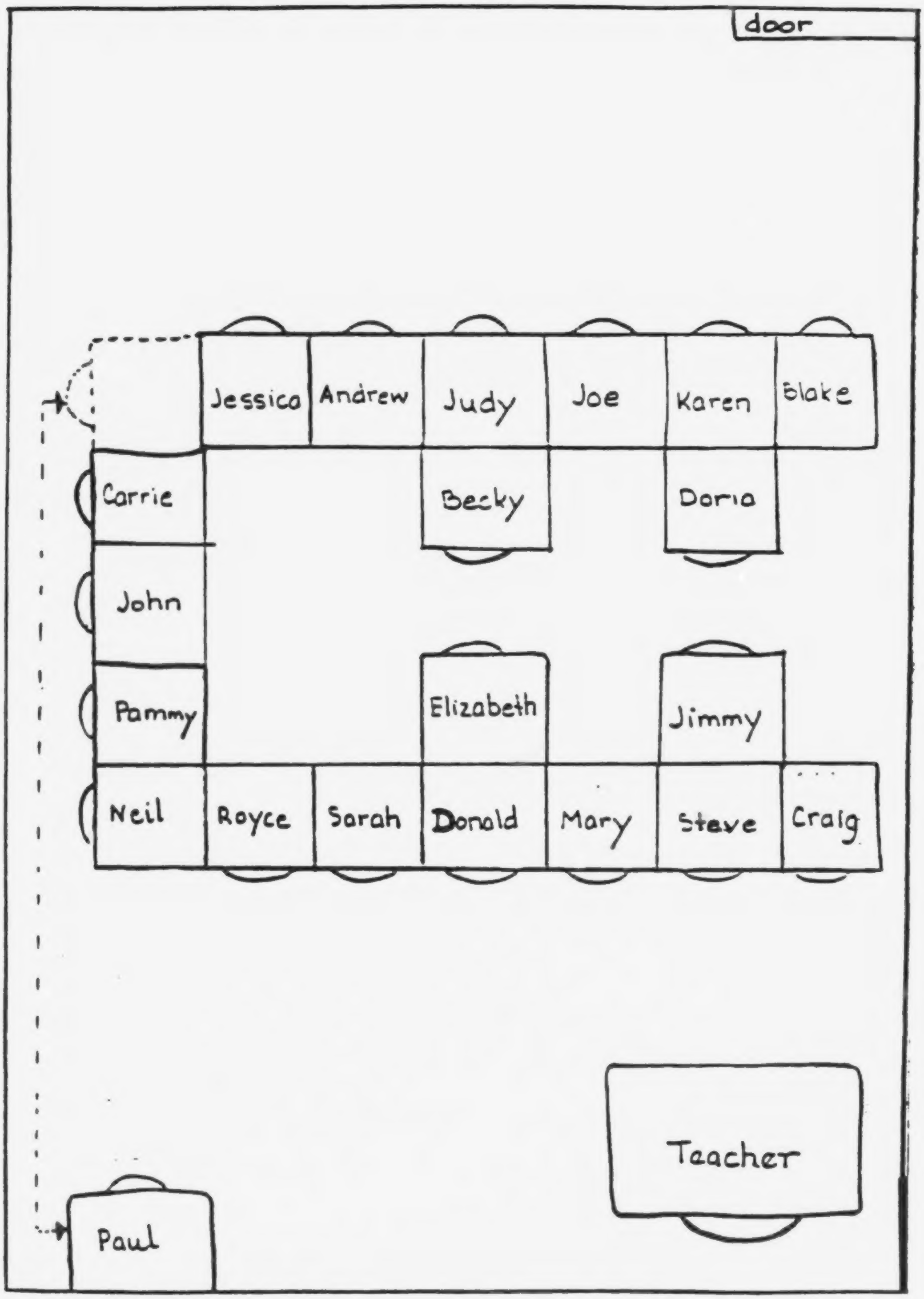

door
Jessica
Andrew
Judy
Joe
Karen
Blake
Carrie
Becky
Doria
John
Pammy
Elizabeth
Jimmy
Neil
Royce
Sarah
Donald
Mary
Steve
Craig
Teacher
Paul

Figure 4: Room arrangement--May 1982.

When the children arrived on the first day of school the teacher had already taped laminated name tags to each desk indicating where the children should sit. Four considerations went into her decision about where to place the children: First, she spread out the highest readers. Reading scores from the past May's testing, recorded on a card prepared by last year's teacher for each child, were used for this. Next, the teacher spread out any children new to the school. Third, "trouble kids" (FN's 9-9-81, p.6) those who were known to have behavior problems, speech problems, or others as noted by their first grade teacher were separated on the periphery of the group. The teacher said that her recollections of her observations of the children from last year also influenced her decisions. First and second graders share recess time and the teachers share recess duty. This gives the second grade teachers a year to observe the children before they get them. Finally, the teacher said that she put the shorter children in the front. Presumably she knows their height from observation, as it was not recorded on the child's data card.

Backdrop: A School Year

A physical description of the classroom can give the reader a mental picture of the school environment. The reader's own experience of being a student should give some degree of familiarity to the scene. What is more difficult to recreate for the reader, however, are the particularities of the rhythm of this classroom in this school year. Before I present the findings relative to the research questions of this study a general feeling of the way the 1981-82 school year went for the teacher will be given. What follows is a highly interpretive context-stripped synoptic look at her calendar year. I have attempted to delineate high and low points of the year. Later, it will be important to contrast the tempo of the year with the times of the year when the teacher made her special education referral decisions. I hope this synoptic view will be helpful in seeing how setting children apart was, to an extent, practically grounded to different points of the school year. Each school year has a pattern and a rhythm of its own. The experienced teacher is in charge of the class but it is the children who are in control. As I looked back on the 1981-82 school year in Room 125 through the teacher's interview comments and in our informal conversations, I formed impressions of the high and low points she experienced during the year. On the overview figure that follows (see Figure 5) the tempo of the year is traced via the heavy black line to the right of the page. I have distilled each month down to its major happenings or feelings and have used direct quotes from the fieldnotes. A discussion of the figure follows.

September was a time of beginnings. It was a time of rules and routines. There was an overall focus on classroom climate. The teacher made an attempt to spot potential problems and problem children. She tried to intervene before things could get out of hand. She was very much in charge. She told me that she allowed little time for self-expression or exploration at this point in

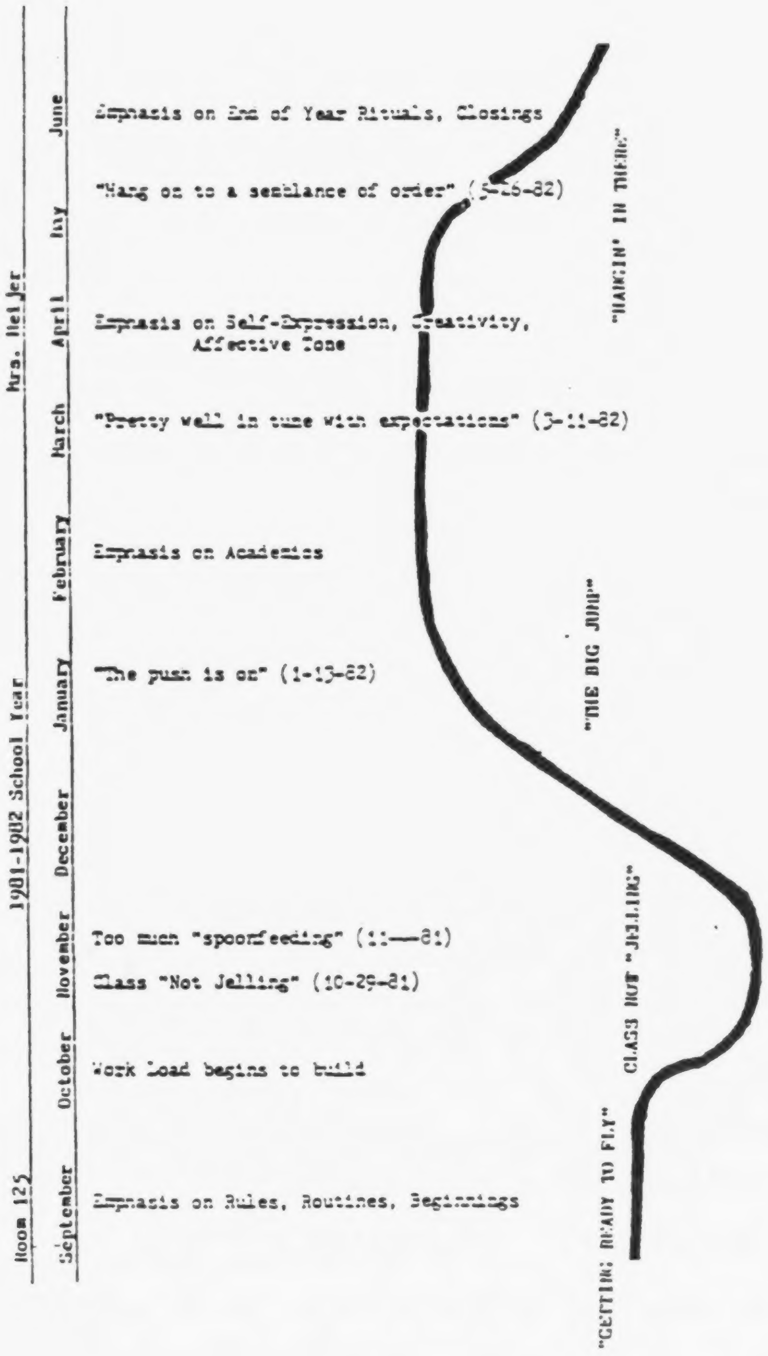


Figure 5: Overview tempo of the 1981-82 school year.

the year on purpose. The room arrangement at the beginning of the year supported the teacher's contention that she was academically oriented with the children being separated into ordered rows.

October brought on a "getting to know you" mood to Room 125. The teacher increasingly focused on individual children's personalities, needs, and strengths. It was at this point in the year that the first set of children were seriously considered for referral to special education services. By mid-month the work load in the room had picked up significantly. The reminders of rules and routines, common up to this point, were at a minimum. The teacher expected the children to begin to work more independently. She was not going to, as she said, do anymore "spoon-feeding." This was the beginning of her feelings of dissatisfaction with the class's progress. The teacher started talking to me about the class "not jelling" (FN's 10-29-81, p.7). This feeling carried over into November. At the same time the other second grade teacher was talking about one of her students getting ready to "fly" in her work. By this she said that she meant the girl was ready to really zoom ahead with the schoolwork. These were indications that both teachers expected some sort of change to be occurring by this point in the school year.

About this time the class began the preparation of artwork for Halloween. There were special projects and activities right on into November and December. The three weeks between Thanksgiving and the Christmas vacation were taken up with holiday rituals: making gifts for parents, doing special art projects, and baking together in the school kitchen. At the same time, the children were expected to be more independent and not to rely on their teacher for as much assistance as earlier in the year. The teacher indicated that she felt like she was "spinning her wheels" (FN's 12-1-81, p.3).

The New Year, 1982, seemed to signal a new phase for the teacher. She referred to this period as the beginning of the "big jump." "The push is on" she said (FN's 1-13-82, p.2). It was time for "shooting ahead and teaching kids thing" (FN's 2-23-82, p.3). She increasingly put emphasis on the curriculum. In interviews she talked about where she was going in each academic area. There was less talk about problems or individual children, although these did not cease to be of importance. She was not going to keep the majority of the class waiting for the stragglers any longer.

The "big jump" mood continued from January to March when the teacher stated that her class was "pretty well in tune with expectations" (FN's 3-11-82, p.2). At this point in the year she felt she could let down a little and allow the children more time for affective activities. They had more class discussion. The seating arrangements were more group oriented, although the children still faced the chalkboard as cursive writing continued to be introduced, a few letters at a time.

Spring vacation was in early April and the teacher predicted that it would be all downhill after that point. In 1982 there was an unusually lengthy ten weeks after vacation until school closed.

Both second grade teachers had lamented about what a long spring it was going to be. April and May passed, and some of the children were still finishing up the major project of the year: the wild animal "research report."

For the teacher the end of May and early June were the "hanging in there" time of the year. A "gang of boys" had formed and the girls were pairing up. Children's feelings were hurt when best friends changed overnight. The teacher spoke to me about trying to "maintain her cool." Reading testing, math testing, and a second grade play about nature all disrupted the normal daily schedule. The end of the year rituals and special events occupied a great deal of class time until the last day of school, June 17. The day before school closed the children received their teacher assignments for the next year. They all counted down the final thirty seconds on June 17 and they were "officially" third graders. The children climbed aboard their buses and left home.

The Teacher of Room 125

Before I move further in the story I would like to introduce the main character of the study. Up to this point she has been described only as "the teacher" or "she." Mrs. Meijer (not her real name) was in her early thirties. She had been teaching for seven years, all in the Seneca School District, and was in her second year as a second grade teacher at Pawnee School. Mrs. Meijer had taught fourth grade at another school in the district previously. She received her bachelors degree in elementary education and her masters degree in reading from the university located nearby. After college she stayed in the area, obtaining her first teaching job in the Seneca District. Mrs. Meijer is Caucasian, and divorced, and was raising her young daughter alone at the time of the study. She had volunteered to take part in a larger study (Teacher's Practical Ways of Seeing, Frederick Erickson, Principal Investigator, for the Institute for Research on Teaching at Michigan State University). She was very open as to her personal feelings about teaching and what went on in the classroom. Mrs. Meijer could express herself in ways that were easy to understand. It should be remembered that most of her words were being recorded and a great deal of her teaching was being videotaped. Audiovisual recording usually inhibits a person not used to "performing."

The Children of Room 125

The next layer that must be added to the description of the setting for this study is to talk about the children in Room 125. In order for the reader to understand how Mrs. Meijer came to set apart children for special education referral it will help to have a general sense of what the children in this classroom were like.

It has already been noted that these children knew a great deal about how to go to school on the first day. They came from predominantly middle to upper middle class Caucasian families that tended to value education. There was one non-Caucasian child (Chinese-American) in the room. To someone who has taught only in an urban or rural school district this class of children may not seem entirely familiar, at least on the surface.

From an academic perspective, their Class Profile shows that on the Complete Battery total, fifty seven percent (57%) of the children scored in the middle stanines (4, 5, 6) and forty three percent (43%) scored in the upper stanines (7, 8, 9) (Stanford Achievement Test, Primary I, Form A; October 1, 2, & 5 1981). No children scored in the lower stanines on the Complete Battery, but some individual student's subtests were in the lower stanines. The class had a grade equivalent of 3.0 at the beginning of second grade (2.0). Total class grade equivalents and stanines for each of the subtests are available in Appendix B. The grade equivalent scores for the subtests ranged from 2.5 (math concepts) to 3.5 (listening comprehension). There was no evidence to indicate that this Class Profile was dissimilar to those seen in previous years in this school district by Mrs. Meijer.

A class has another reputation besides an academic one that it brings with it to a new grade. This reputation, real or perceived, is based on the folklore that develops about the class, for example in the teachers lounge, in the halls, on recess duty, while monitoring the bus lines, and in teachers' meetings. Before the school year began both second grade teachers had been told by the first grade teachers to expect attention problems. Accordingly, the teachers planned several listening activities for the first weeks of school because they had so many "singers, hummers, and mumblers" (FN's 9-9-81, p. 7) as Mrs. Meijer put it. There were several rambunctious boys in the second grade and both teachers said that Mrs. Meijer had gotten the greater share of them.

Mrs. Meijer said that there were more children with speech impediments (three) and more children with psychological files (six) than she had ever had before. Psychological files are usually established for children who have been referred for special help or who are in special education. In Viewing Session #2 (11-12-81, pp. 6 & 7) Mrs. Meijer talked about the children having short attention spans and being immature. She also said that she had never had so many children who "needed to sit alone in order to function" (p. 6). Both she and the other second grade teacher were hesitant to make jokes with the children or to relax much because the children got off task so quickly. She felt that she lacked rapport with this class and that they were a "lazy bunch" (FN's 11-4-81, p. 3).

The above descriptions were meant to give the reader a feeling that, although academically this class of children was average or above average, the teacher felt that she had a challenging class because of the problems referred to above. Both aspects of their reputation, the academic and the social, should be looked at in the analysis of Mrs. Meijer's setting children apart for special education referral.

Special Education Referral Process

The last piece of background information about the setting for this study that is needed before the findings are presented has to do with how children are referred for special education services in the Seneca School District. The process of referring a child for special education services at Pawnee School was a fairly straightforward procedure. A teacher, parent, or the principal could initiate the referral process. The district used a fourpage referral form that was completed by the classroom teacher (see Appendix C) and given to the principal. The principal forwarded the referral to the district office. Then the referral child was discussed at a building team meeting with the classroom teacher and the specialists present. At this meeting the specialists would share any previous information about the child that they might have. A decision would be made about requesting the parents' signature on the psychological evaluation form. The team may have decided to have the building resource room teacher observe the child in the child's classroom and do some educational evaluation before having the psychologist test the child. If this was the case, the team generally met again. They may have made further recommendations to the teacher or have decided not to pursue psychological evaluation.

After the evaluations were completed the team met again to present their findings to the teacher. The parents were notified by the appropriate specialist. Shortly thereafter the formal Individualized Educational Program (I.E.P.) Meeting was held with the parent(s) in attendance. The I.E.P. Meeting at Pawnee School conforms to state and federal guidelines. Those present at the meetings vary somewhat, depending on the child's suspected disability. In a case of suspected learning disabilities, the principal, the classroom teacher, the school psychologist, the resource room teacher, and the parents are present. The principal would greet the parents and introduce them to the staff. They were informed that the meeting was being held to sign papers to certify the outcome of the testing that had been completed. The parents were given a booklet describing the services for the learning disabled in the state.

Usually the specialists have each already explained the test results to the parents by telephone, but they each go over their findings briefly at the meeting. Complete written psychological and educational evaluations can be read by the classroom teacher at a later date by contacting the principal or the school psychologist. Then the psychologist summarizes for the parents and makes a recommendation regarding placement. This is discussed and anyone with questions asks them. Then the proper I.E.P. form is signed and the determination to place or not to place in special education is entered. If the child is found eligible for placement, a more detailed discussion is held outlining when and where services are to be delivered. Objectives for the child, and the other legally mandated components of the I.E.P. (P.L. 94-142) are written.

The following figure summarizes the referral process at Pawnee School (see Figure 6). The decision points are marked by diamond shapes. In a school district such as Seneca that uses a discrepancy between achievement and ability to determine eligibility for learning disabilities services, a "not eligible" determination, at the lower elementary grades in particular, does not necessarily signal the end of the referral line for a child. The committee may decide to keep the child "under observation" for a specified amount of time and then look at eligibility again, hence the "No, but" decision on the flow chart. This apparently is done because it may take additional time for a discrepancy to show up for a learning disability.

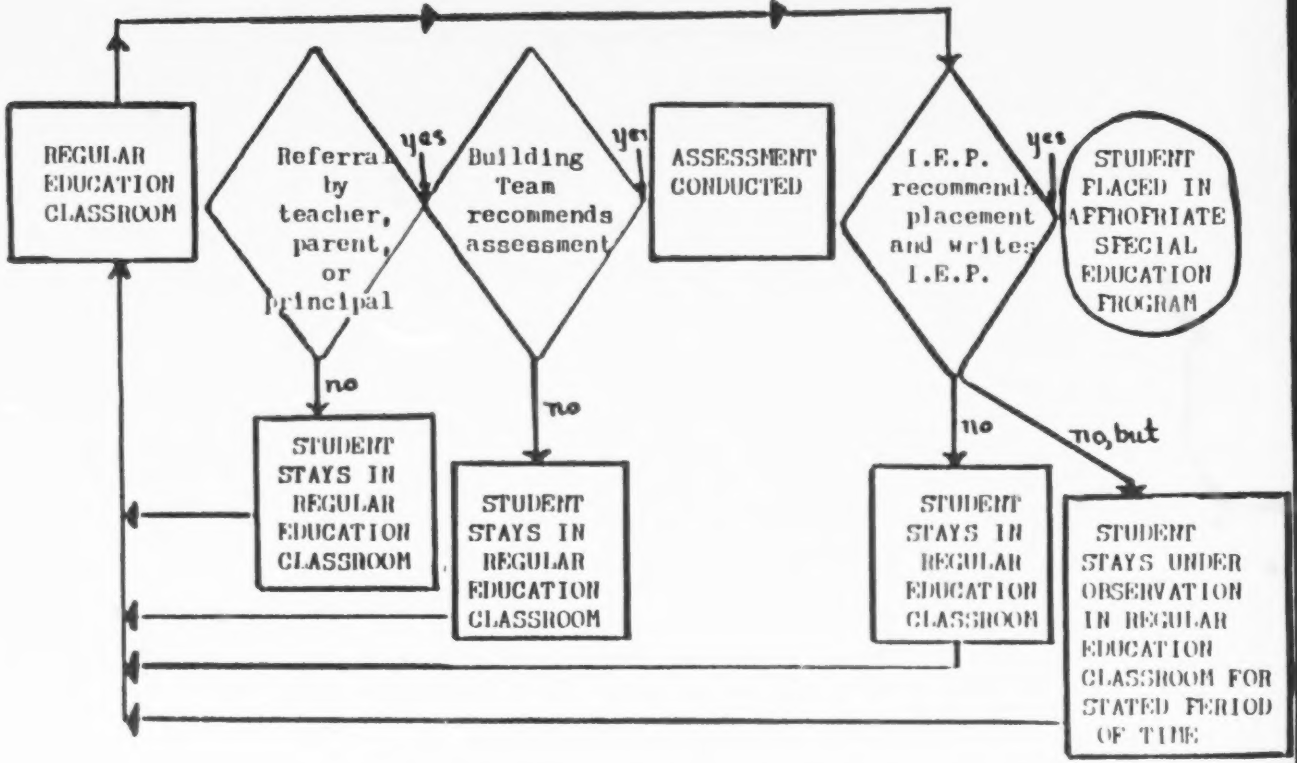

REGULAR EDUCATION CLASSROOM
Referral by teacher, parent, or principal
yes
no
Building Team recommends assessment
yes
no
ASSESSMENT CONDUCTED
I.E.P. recommends placement and writes I.E.P.
yes
no
no, but
STUDENT PLACED IN APPROPRIATE SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM
STUDENT STAYS IN REGULAR EDUCATION CLASSROOM
STUDENT STAYS IN REGULAR EDUCATION CLASSROOM
STUDENT STAYS IN REGULAR EDUCATION CLASSROOM
STUDENT STAYS UNDER OBSERVATION IN REGULAR EDUCATION CLASSROOM FOR STATED PERIOD OF TIME

Figure 6: Special education referral process at Pawnee School, 1981-82.

Findings: Getting a Special Education Identity in a Second-Grade Class

I will return to the initial issue of the study, children with mild to moderate learning or behavioral problems. Such children are usually not considered for special education services until they enter school. These mild to moderate problems include learning disabilities and emotional impairments (see Appendix D for definitions used). The identification process begins when a classroom teacher notices student behavior that causes her or him to set students apart, or categorize them, as being in need of additional attention. In other words, the teacher feels that something special may have to be done to meet the needs of these students. The primary questions addressed in this study revolved around the beginning of the identification process. The focus was on the regular classroom teacher's role in choosing the children to be referred for special education. The broad research question guiding this study was: *How does a teacher come to identify children as being in need of special education services in the early elementary grades?*

The decision an early elementary grades teacher makes when determining whether to refer a child for special education services or not is based on a phenomenological perspective of the child. The actual act of referral involves filling out a form by the teacher, but the factors a teacher considers before filling out the form are much more complicated. These factors and the way the teacher perceives and categorizes each child are the subject of this study. There was something special about the way a child set himself or herself apart, both spatially and temporally, that alerted the teacher to a possible problem. Certainly a child with academic and/or behavior problems could trigger a referral to special education, but in this case there seemed to be something that transcended the physical list of characteristics on the special education referral form and caused the teacher to set some children apart for referral to special education.

The critical nature of the interactions between teachers and children in the first days of any school year has been pointed out by other researchers (Clark & Yinger, 1979; Emmer, Evertson, & Anderson, 1980; Gomes, 1979). These early interactions form a basis for the way a teacher thinks about a child for the rest of the year. Teachers' expectations for the child are set by school records, what they have heard from other teachers, and their own impressions from those early days of the school year (Brophy, 1982). In this study, general expectations for the class as a whole guided the teacher's decision making. Her referral decisions coincided with certain points in the overall rhythm of the school year. The children who were referred for special education received varying amounts of the teacher's attention throughout the year. There were two critical times in the school year when the teacher gathered all of her information about the children together and was more inclined to make a formal referral for special education. The first came around the last two weeks in October. At this point the academic work started to become more important than the rules and routines. The second major decision point came at the beginning of January and lasted for several weeks. The teacher described this as her time for pushing ahead and teaching kids things, her big academic push. She was looking to see which children could take the push and which could not.

This chapter of findings begins with a discussion of how Mrs. Meijer saw her class, with particular emphasis on two of her terms: focus and jelling. These two terms are related to the research question. Following this discussion there is a detailed description of how Mrs. Meijer started setting children apart into various groups. Vignettes of the two children who were referred for special education by Mrs. Meijer add rich descriptions to the reporting. A summary of the major research findings concludes the section.

A Teacher Views Her Class

A photographer must have the ability to focus on his subject accurately. He must also be able to look at the overall composition of his intended photograph and select the correct frame for his subject. A classroom teacher, like the photographer, must also make decisions about focus and frame in the classroom. Mrs. Meijer used the term "focus" many times when talking about the children in her class throughout the course of the 1981-82 school year. Her personal interest in photography may have influenced her extensive use of the term, but it is an apt metaphor for the identification process. Before a teacher refers a child for special education, he or she spends many hours trying to frame a child's abilities against his or her expectations. The teacher spends hours focusing in on specific children as he or she attempts to locate the child's problems. To even the most casual observer of the classroom scene, it must be clear that it is impossible for a teacher to be aware of all that is occurring at any one time. The aim of a teacher's classroom focus may be to get the overall, or wide-angle, view of her class. This was particularly true of Mrs. Meijer's focus at the beginning of the year. Classroom management was a primary concern as she did not yet know the children well. I observed her as she quickly scanned over the classroom until something caught her eye, and then she would focus on it. Mrs. Meijer also used the term "focus" to apply to an individual child or small group. She would tell a certain child to focus on his or her work, or say, "This is your next focus." Both uses of the term changed as the year progressed.

Mrs. Meijer's framing changed from wide-angle to telescopic once she got to know the children better. She would "zoom" in on individual children in an attempt to get a detailed look at them as the photographer does when a telephoto lens is used. Mrs. Meijer also did this when she worked with small groups of children. For example, when she was teaching a small reading group, that group was her frame of reference. Children doing seatwork were blurred into the background context and only became salient if there was a noise or movement that disturbed the overall picture for Mrs. Meijer. If this occurred she quickly expanded her frame to the entire class until the disruption ceased, with or without her direct intervention.

At the beginning of the year, Mrs. Meijer used the term "focus" to mean eye contact on the part of the child. The meaning of "focus" when applied to individual children was discussed in Interview 3.

> ... just means looking at. Focusing their eyes, and most of the time, like with Neil, you can have a visual. You can see something visual in his face, where his behavior is showing you that he's not attending to what you're doing.... (FN's 9-22-81, p. 2)

By the spring of the year, "focus" had taken on a deeper meaning. In Interview 8, Mrs. Meijer discussed her ideas about this term again.

> ... Focus doesn't merely mean looking at the teacher. It also means processing what's expected of you. ... Focus means getting rid of outside distractions. Getting your thoughts on only the thing you're doing and, uh, processing what's being said. (FN's 3-11-82, p. 4)

Her second definition of focus was one that few children at the beginning of second grade are ready for in a developmental sense. Craig, Neil, Pammy, Steve, Mary, and Joe were the children most often mentioned as being out of focus. They received frequent reminders to focus on their work. It is notable that as the year progressed these children were the ones who came to be identified as the target children for the study. This change in the way Mrs. Meijer used the word "focus" paralleled what was happening with the way she viewed individual children. She went from an almost total focus on the children's behavior at the beginning of the year to a focus on the cognitive aspects of the children's progress. Mrs. Meijer used the word "jelling" when talking about this phenomenon. On October 29 she said that she felt her class was "not jelling" (FN's 10-29-81, p. 7). What seemed to lie behind the jelling issue was her expectation that at some point in the fall the class should all start working together and start to move ahead. It was also at this point that the workload began to pick up in the class. Mrs. Meijer began to complain about having to "spoon-feed" the children. This meant that she was having to help them too much. She felt that they should know when to sharpen pencils, when to go to the bathroom, what daily seatwork to do, and where to put their completed work.

In Interview 5 (11-4-81, p. 2), Mrs. Meijer said that jelling was not something that an observer could actually see. I asked her if I could film "jelling." She did not think it would be possible.

> It's a feeling. It's a feeling you have between you and your students. And because that feeling varies from year to year with the personalities you're dealing with, it's never the same.

She said that jelling is an "overall kind of thing" (FN's 11-4-81, p. 1) and individual students are seen as "part of the whole jelling process." The actions of individual students are the phenomena that, when viewed from the teacher's perspective, are what give her the knowledge that her class is jelling.

Four months after the above interview, Mrs. Meijer continued to use the jelling metaphor for the phenomenon of her class working together as one fairly harmonious group.

> Can't say my class isn't jelling. Most of my kids are pretty well in tune with expectations. What I'm noticing with kids like Craig, Steve, and Joe is that they can no longer meet the expectations and they're starting to fall behind. (FN's 3-11-82, p. 2)

It is clear that jelling was tied to the class meeting the teacher's expectations in some way. There came a certain point in the year when most of the children could meet the demands, and then she made her academic thrust. January through March were the most important months for cognitive growth according to Mrs. Meijer. Her personal focus at this time of the year was on the curriculum. She was conscious of the fact that these months were usually the most productive for the children.

On March 11, Mrs. Meijer mentioned to me that three children were not able to keep up with her expectations. They were, in addition, among those whom she described as not being able to focus. The children in a classroom who are not "processing" what is expected of them and are not "in tune" with the teacher's expectations are the children most apt to be set apart by the classroom teacher for further consideration. The children who were considered for referral for special education services in the 1981-82 school year came from this group of children who set themselves apart and/or had been set apart by Mrs. Meijer. These children will be discussed after a description of some of the children for whom Mrs. Meijer had high expectations is presented.

Setting Children Apart

A feeling for the way the class ran for the majority of children is needed as contrast for the stories that will come later in this section of the children who were having difficulties. Context is crucial to understanding the research questions and findings in a participant observational study. Some stories about the children who were succeeding in the class will be told. A discussion of the groups that Mrs. Meijer set apart during the year will follow. Finally, an examination of the groups that became the foci of this study will be presented. Fieldnotes for a full morning early in the 1981-82 school year are reproduced in Appendix E. These notes describe what happened on a "typical" morning (9-25-81). The activities for the half-day included: opening of class activities, a handwriting lesson, boardwork explanation, journal writing, spelling groups, reading groups, film and snack time, and seatwork. These fieldnotes are typical of the kinds of observations noted throughout this year-long study. Sections from the fieldnotes that were interesting to me because of some relationship to a possible handicap were further developed into stories about particular children and events. What follows is a series of five vignettes that I wrote from the fieldnote data. These vignettes present the reader with a "look" at the classroom interactions. Later in this chapter I will separate the children into sets according to the way Mrs. Meijer was beginning to see them in terms of their overall classroom performance. The children who were succeeding in the class according to the teacher's expectations can be considered to be her benchmark children. Mrs. Meijer used these children as her reference points throughout the school year to judge the progress of other children. The stories will feature benchmark and target children together in interactions, as well as the two groups interacting with the other children in the class. Below is a listing of the children most often cited by Mrs. Meijer in interviews and talks as being members of the two groups.

Benchmark Children		Target Children	
Donald	Paul	Steve	Mary
Elizabeth	Sarah	Joe	Pammy
Jessica	Andrew	Craig	Neil

The following story about the Red Math Group shows the five children in the lower math group interacting with the teacher. Of this group of five children, Craig was the only one referred for special education. Notice how he responded to teacher directions. Notice also how Mrs. Meijer used a concrete approach as she directed her small group lesson.

Subtraction Lesson--Red Math Group

Steve, Sarah, Craig, Karen, and Carrie (Mary was absent) were called back to the group area of the carpet for their math group. Mrs. Meijer wrote on the board:

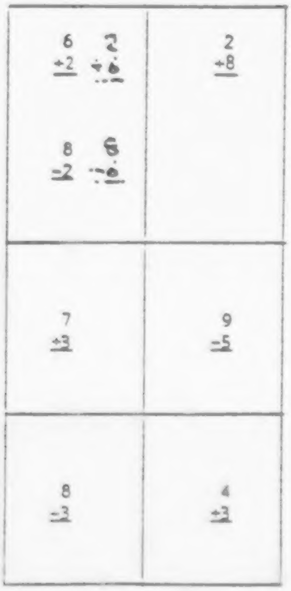
$$\begin{array}{r} 2 \\ \underline{+3} \end{array} \qquad \begin{array}{r} 3 \\ \underline{+2} \end{array} \qquad \begin{array}{r} 5 \\ \underline{-2} \end{array} \qquad \begin{array}{r} 5 \\ \underline{-3} \end{array}$$

All of the children were looking directly at the board except Craig. Mrs. Meijer asked them if they could see how the numbers 2, 3, and 5 could be worked four different ways. She spread out five workbooks on the floor in front of the children. She used them to show how four different problems could be worked. The children could see, visually, how the operations worked. Mrs. Meijer erased the previous example and wrote:

$$\begin{array}{r} 2 \\ \underline{+8} \end{array} \qquad \begin{array}{r} 8 \\ \underline{+2} \end{array} \qquad \begin{array}{r} 10 \\ \underline{-} \end{array} \qquad \begin{array}{r} 10 \\ \underline{-} \end{array}$$

She called their attention to the sample box in their math book (p. 25). Craig looked on Karen's page. Mrs. Meijer appeared to be totally focused on her math group, but had to interrupt them at this point to tell the people doing seatwork that there was too much "buzz" this morning and to remind them to do their own work. Paul, Donald, Neil, and Joe were singled out and told to get busy.

The Red Math Group worked individually on the problems on page 25. Mrs. Meijer helped Craig, at least three times that I counted, by giving him explanations of how to do the work. Mrs. Meijer went back to helping the others and then checked their answers. Sarah was the only one who seemed to understand what they were doing as I watched. Steve appeared very confused. He was looking and did not do any writing. He looked around at the other children. Mrs. Meijer asked them all to look at the next sample box on page 26. Mrs. Meijer wrote: 9-5= and 9-4= . This time Craig appeared to be watching her write up the examples. She again used the workbooks to show them how to work the problems.



> After working for about ten minutes on these problems, Mrs. Meijer checked their progress. Karen and Sarah were excused to their seats because they were finished. Mrs. Meijer still watched Steve, Carrie, and Craig and helped them as needed. Craig was excused next, then Carrie, and finally, Steve. (FN's 10-13-81)

This story represents a typical meeting of the low math group. A concept would be reviewed or explained. Mrs. Meijer would go through some examples on the board. The pages would be assigned and then checked by Mrs. Meijer. She excused children as they finished or demonstrated that they understood the concept sufficiently to work on their own at their desk. She watched over the work as it progressed in front of her, helping on a one-to-one basis if a child had difficulties. The use of concrete materials to explain the problems was common. The high math group (Yellow) was much larger and the children received less individual help, but the procedures were generally the same as for the Red Group. Both groups used the same book, the difference being that in September the children in the Yellow Group had started about two chapters further back in the book than the Red Group. In the low group all the children except Craig had known to look at the board for the teacher's examples. They had also known to look at the examples in their book when a teacher directed them to, while Craig looked at a neighbor's book instead.

In the following description of a large group lesson that occurred in December, notice the difference in the way the benchmark and target children (see Figure 7 for a list of names) responded to Mrs. Meijer in the lesson on question words. Members of each group both volunteered and gave correct and incorrect responses. Also notice the differences in the actions of the two groups when they were actually directed to start working on their daily assignments.

Who-What-Where-When-Why

> Mrs. Meijer began the group lesson by asking the children to "generate" a list of question words. Hands shot up immediately from John, Elizabeth, Jessica, and then Pammy. John, the first called upon, came up with "How." The children gave more question words and they were written on the chalkboard by Mrs. Meijer. Karen, Andrew, and Steve put their hands up to volunteer. Steve was called on. He said, "There." Mrs. Meijer asked him if "there" asks a question and told him that "there" usually tells something. Andrew was called upon next, responding, "They." Mrs. Meijer pointed out why they were wrong and moved on. Most of the children appeared to be watching her. Steve volunteered "is" next and was told that he had given a correct answer.
>
> Mrs. Meijer then asked them if they had ever heard of the five w-h words that go together and are asking words. No one had the answer, so she told them that the five words were: where, when, what, why, and who. They were asked to practice saying these and to memorize them. She asked them all to say the five words together. A chorus of "Who, what, where, when, and why" could be heard. Steve said, "Who, what, where, why" twice as they practiced, leaving out "when." Both times Elizabeth turned around in her seat and looked at him. He seemed oblivious to his omission.
>
> Mrs. Meijer started going over the assignments for the next morning. Some children (Elizabeth and Andrew) were sprawled over their desks, and several more were yawning or stretching (Jessica, Karen, and Judy). By this time, Craig and Steve were no longer paying attention to Mrs. Meijer. Craig was wearing the recording vest with the radio-microphone. At this point in the year he was sitting next to Steve. Their desks were the closest ones to Mrs. Meijer's desk, near the front chalkboard, where most of the explanations were given. After Mrs. Meijer finished the discussion and gave directions, she suggested that they take their seatwork pages out of their desks. Jessica was the only one who was already getting out her math book as Mrs. Meijer talked. Soon

> Elizabeth, Sarah, Judy, Andrew, Karen, Mary, Pammy, and the others began to do as directed, but not Craig and Steve. Finally Steve made a move to start working and Craig called out to the teacher, "What's the top one?" (VTN's 12-4-81). He was referring to the top words in the daily boardwork list that were written on the chalkboard directly to the side of his desk. Mrs. Meijer came over and asked him to sound out the words. He decoded slowly, "Student council report." Mrs. Meijer said nothing further and Craig stood looking at the board for a few seconds, then hummed to himself as he went about getting out his workbook pages, glancing at the board from time to time.
>
> Craig helped Steve find some of his pages. Then, as Craig tried to tear the day's math page out of his workbook, he ripped the page as often happens with perforated pages. "Oopsie," he sheepishly muttered. Steve looked at Craig and mimicked him. Then he said, "Oopsie, oopsie, goody, goody." Steve got his paper out of the book without ripping it and said, "My first time doing it right."
>
> Mrs. Meijer was at the paper cutter across the room explaining something to Judy. With only a glance toward her, Craig, torn paper in hand, headed in her direction. He began to call her name for help before he was even halfway over to the spot where she was standing. He said, "This ripped when I was taking it out." Mrs. Meijer made Craig wait until she was done with Judy and then told him to go get a piece of tape from her desk to fix his paper. Then she made a general announcement to the class that they were wasting too much tape and should be more careful when tearing out their pages.
>
> Craig returned to his seat to make the repairs and went up to Mrs. Meijer's desk to get a piece of tape. He carefully put it on the torn sections and then noticed that there was not enough tape to cover the entire rip, so he had to go back for more. After he had placed the second piece of tape on the page he held the page up to the light and called to Steve, "Hey, look it. You can see through it!" (FN's 12-4-81)

It took Craig nearly six minutes to get ready to do his daily assignments. With the exception of Steve, who had been kept involved with Craig's torn paper, the rest of the class had quite a head start on him. While Craig's six-minute lag might seem insignificant when set against an entire school day, it was unfortunate for Craig and others like him that these lags tended to occur on a daily basis and in a variety of situations, not just before getting started on their assignments. Both Craig and Steve had partially focused on what Mrs. Meijer expected them to do, but neither appeared to understand the assignments well enough to stay focused on what they should have been doing during the time of the torn math paper.

In the next vignette, a contrast between Elizabeth's and Craig's comprehension of the teacher's directions is apparent. Craig figured out how to get a piece of drawing paper only after watching another child, but he used his new knowledge to help a third child.

Getting a Piece of Drawing Paper

> On the first day of school, a half day, at about 11:15, Mrs. Meijer told the class that she wanted them to draw a self-portrait before they went home. The children were busy finishing up the rest of the morning's activities and were at different stages of readiness to begin their portraits. Mrs. Meijer gave the directions for the art project and told the children to ask her for a piece of drawing paper when they were ready. Mrs. Meijer continued with writing on the chalkboard, and some of the children began to draw themselves. Donald looked around the room, apparently trying to figure out where the drawing paper was. Craig seemed to have the same question on his mind, and he went over to Mrs. Meijer. He asked her where the paper was. He was told to think about what she had said. Right then, Elizabeth came up and asked Mrs. Meijer for a piece of drawing paper and she was handed a sheet. Craig, looking puzzled, seemed to be trying to figure out what Elizabeth had done that he hadn't. Mrs. Meijer went on about her work, leaving him to stand there thinking.
>
> A few minutes later, Royce went up to Mrs. Meijer and asked her where the drawing paper was. He received

Paul demonstrated his withitness by trying to talk someone into taking the rap although he apparently was not willing to do it himself. Elizabeth summoned up her courage and decided to risk admitting it was hers. It is not known if Mrs. Meijer heard or saw what Paul was up to or if it really was Elizabeth's bag. The former is more probable than the latter to me, based on my observations. In any case, Elizabeth demonstrated her withitness by feeling able to volunteer to take the rap in order that all the rest of the children might get to their buses on time. The plan did not succeed. These stories conclude the look at the general interactions of the class and at the beginnings of how this experienced teacher set children apart.

Throughout the course of this year-long study of one second-grade teacher, the focus of the observation revolved around how she determined if any children needed to be referred for special education services. The story became a study of the practical ways a teacher sees the children in her classroom. The story is about how the teacher judged a child's ability to learn effectively from her and what she decided to do about it if she felt the child needed some outside intervention. As the school year progressed, the children were informally sorted into categories. These categories were largely undefined, but they seemed to form sets for the teacher to ponder.

To begin to understand how Mrs. Meijer went about grouping "families" of children together, the fieldnotes and interview audiotapes were carefully examined to identify her specific verbal

Paul was able to come up to the teacher, get her attention and help, and go back to his seat to finish his work. Pammy was waiting for the teacher's help, but she never followed through. She used up more time than Paul, and she never received the teacher's help. She may have had the same question as Paul and therefore benefited from Mrs. Meijer's response to him. This is not known.

In December Mrs. Meijer told me that she was not happy about the progress of her class. On a day that had not gone well, the children were cleaning up and getting ready to go home. Mrs. Meijer said later that she had been at her "sharpest" (FN's 12-9-81, p. 2).

Taking the Rap

> It was a Wednesday and there had been a student council popcorn sale that afternoon. Many of the children had purchased popcorn. Mrs. Meijer had found a wadded-up popcorn bag on the floor just as the children were lined up, coats and hats on, all ready to go to their buses. She asked for the person responsible to claim it. No one did. She waited. Children nervously looked around at each other. Toward the back of the line Paul was quietly trying to talk someone into claiming the bag so they could leave. Suddenly, Elizabeth spoke up and said it was hers and tried to take the bag from Mrs. Meijer. Mrs. Meijer just looked at Elizabeth. The look on her face implied that she did not believe the bag was Elizabeth's, and she did not give it to her. She asked for the real person to claim it. No one did. Mrs. Meijer said that there would be no student council popcorn for anyone next week. The children, looking disappointed and doing some groaning, filed out and got on their buses. (FN's 12-9-81, p. 2)

Paul and Elizabeth were two of the children whom Mrs. Meijer considered among her brightest and most "withit" kids. "Withit" was used in the sense of knowing what to do at the right time and doing it. (I will return to Mrs. Meijer's use of this term.)

> the same response as Craig and stood there looking puzzled too. At that point Craig came over to Royce and whispered something to him. Royce went back up to the teacher and said, "May I have some paper?" Mrs. Meijer responded, "Yes, you may," and gave him the desired sheet of drawing paper. (FN's 9-9-81, p. 4)

Even though I did not observe how Craig figured out what Mrs. Meijer's directions had been, this episode seems to demonstrate that he learned the correct response needed to obtain the piece of paper without having to be told again by Mrs. Meijer. It also shows one of the "withit" children, Elizabeth, following directions correctly on the first attempt. She may have modeled a correct response for Craig or she may have told him what to say.

From the beginning of the year several students in the class stood out as being more adept in the role of student than others. One of these children was Elizabeth; another was Paul. Elizabeth's ability to obtain needed materials was just described. The following example demonstrates Paul's ability to approach the teacher for help, get it, and return to his assignments. At the same time Pammy attempts the same activity and does not get the teacher's help.

Approaching the Teacher for Help

> It was shortly before lunch and Mrs. Meijer was helping individual children with their seatwork as they came up to her with questions. She was sitting at the small reading table talking to Gail. Pammy went up and waited for her turn. Paul came up next and they both stood around the table waiting. Mrs. Meijer finished with Gail and acknowledged Paul first. Pammy stood there waiting. She seemed to forget why she was there and went back to her seat, never having talked to Mrs. Meijer. (FN's 9-22-81, p. 1)

references to sets of children. It was felt that these natural families might show some resemblances to one another that would prove to be indicative of the patterns involved when she set children apart for a specific purpose, as in referral for special education services. Seventeen sets were thus identified (see Figure 7). These sets are by no means mutually exclusive, nor do they include formal groupings made by Mrs. Meijer for instructional purposes, as in her reading, spelling, and math groups. Rather, they reflect the informal day-to-day observations that Mrs. Meijer felt were important to point out in interviews or in discussions of the day's happenings. It is noteworthy that 14 of the 17 sets of children were problem groupings. That is, they were groups of children mentioned as having, or causing, specific problems for Mrs. Meijer.

Some of these problem sets were made up of children the teacher considered referring for special education services. These were the children I most closely observed through the fieldwork process. I wanted to discover what it was about these children that had caused the teacher to refer them for special education. She referred to them as her "target" children (FN's 9-21-81, p. 2). Of all the problem sets, why did certain children become "target" children?

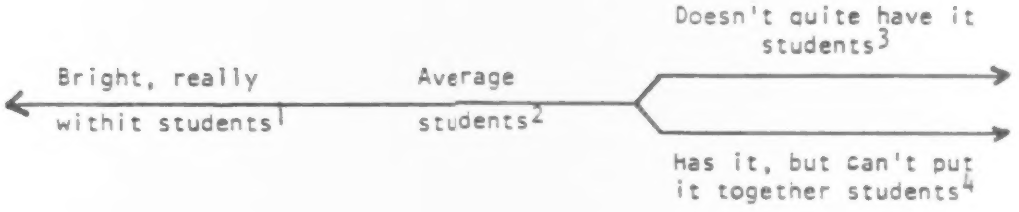
Other sets of children identified by the teacher were studied as a means of contrast. The pool of children from which the sets were formed consisted of the members of Mrs. Meijer's second-grade class during the 1981-82 school year. Informal categories created

Benchmark(B), Has It Bad(H), Doesn't Quite(D), Normal(N), Target(T), Not Categorized(NC)

Date	Sarah (B)	Eliza. (B)	Neil (H)	Andrew (B)	Stevie (D)	Tammy (H)	Craig (H)	Jimmy (N)	Gail (T)	Joe (D)	John (N)	July (N)	Royce (N)	Jason (T)	Becky (N)	Paul (B)	Mary (D)	Jessica (B)	Doria (NC)	Donald (B)	Blake (N)	Karen (N)	Carrie (N)	Sally (NC)	FAMILY RESEMBLANCES (BRIEF DESCRIPTIONS)
9-9	X	X	X	X																					wanted to get to know right away
9-10			X		X	X																			first group of "isolated" children
9-21						X	X	X	X																"targeted" children
10-6						X	X			X															to be tested, need help to go on in school
11-26			X		X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X									came and moved within one week	"need to sit alone in order to function"
12-8				X				X			X					X									"bunch of talkative boys"
1-14					X		X		X	X							X								"off on cloud nine"
2-11							X							X		X									excluded for not following directions
2-11				X					moved mid-year					moved mid-year		X			came mid-year						A=leader P=favorite
3-2					X					X							X								"on a par with I.Q.
3-2			X			A	X	X		X															still concerned about
3-11					X		X			X															"can no longer meet expectations
3-11			X		X		X			X							X								"none of their corrections done last week
3-11				X				X			A					X				X	X				"gang of boys"
3-23			X	X				X			X					X				X					"gang of boys"
5-26				X							X								X	X					highest readers on group reading test
5-26					X		X										X								only kids who scored below grade equiv. on reading test
	1	1	6	6	7	5	9	5	2	7	5	1	1	2	1	5	4	0	1	3	1	0	0	0	Total Times Set Apart in Groups

Figure 7: Mrs. Meijer's informal groupings.

by Mrs. Meijer included the "bright, really withit" children, the "doesn't quite have it" children, and the "has it, but can't put it together" children. The majority of the children in the class were between the upper and lower extremes (see Figure 8), in what I have called the average group as they were never given a family name in our discussions by Mrs. Meijer. The informal categories I have described were groups talked about by Mrs. Meijer, but they were not actual groups in the classroom. She had other types of groups that existed in everyday life. There were reading, math, and spelling groups. She had groupings like her "gang of boys"


Doesn't quite have it students[3]
Bright, really withit students[1]
Average students[2]
Has it, but can't put it together students[4]

[1] Paul
Elizabeth
Andrew
Donald
Jessica
Sarah

[2] Jimmy
Carrie
Judy
John
Karen
Becky
Gail
Jason
Doria
Blake
Sue
Royce

[3] Mary
Joe
Steve

[4] Craig
Neil
Pammy

Figure 8: Informal ability groupings of Room 125 children.

and the children with emotional problems. Children could be members of several groups. Only the informal groups are reflected in Figure 8.

Interviews structured around Mrs. Meijer's class list were held at two different points in the year (late September and mid-March). She was asked to say whatever she wanted about each child. Figure 9 was developed from listening to these two taped interviews and from transcribing Mrs. Meijer's comments about the four groupings of children previously described in Figure 8. Also recorded on the figure are excerpts from Mrs. Meijer's comments from the June report card as they were available for the children of interest. These comments were recorded while I was looking at the report cards alone, and no discussion was held with Mrs. Meijer about them. They are included as an end-of-the-year summary statement of how she felt about each child.

In an interview on March 2, Mrs. Meijer talked about what she saw as the specific problems of the group of children in her "doesn't quite have it" group. She said that Mary, Joe, and Steve were "on a par with I.Q. and what they have on the ball" (FN's 3-2-82, p. 4). According to Mrs. Meijer, Mary has "no specific disability" and will always be "the C student." Steve is "such a pig pen" that he sticks out anyway, and Joe, although he works hard, is going to have a "long school career." By the end of the time she called the "big push" for academics in March, Mrs. Meijer said that Steve and Joe, as well as Craig, could "no longer meet

Name	9-22-81 10- 6-81	3-23-82	6-82 (report card
	Extra Bright, Really With It Kids		
Paul	active, sports-minded, quick finisher, likes to be entertained		continues to be a leader
Andrew	mother is a teacher	work is fine, behavior problems, but getting better	(not recorded)
Elizabeth	mother is a teacher, follows expectations, super worker, no problems	nothing unusual	contin. top performance, super example for others
Donald	"brightest student," except. in math, too silly, push from home	has settled down	super student
Sarah	"another Elizabeth," math anxiety, sensitive, hesitant, quiet	"has really bloomed," no tears lately, up two groups in reading	quiet, positive influence
Jessica	fairly adept, feminine when necess., plays devil's advocate	ordering behavior, "mothering" role to older brother, busybody, losing friends	needs some reminders to stay on task
	Doesn't Quite Have It Kids		
Mary	doesn't like school	works at her ability, misses things	still hesitant
Joe	happy-go-lucky, speech and reading help	immature, silly in hall, bothers others, made progress in spelling and reading	(not recorded)
Steve	disorganized, not keyed to academics, question home support	(mother didn't show up for conference)	difficult student to motivate
	Has It, But Can't Put It Together Kids		
Nell	isolated his desk, turns around and bothers others	low-average ability, could do more if focused, parenting problems	has not internalized appropriate behavior
Pammy	distraction problem, letter formation	parenting problems	has become a much more cheerful student
Craig	immature, listening problems--medical?, one direction at a time, kindergarten repeater, primer reader, adjustment problems every year so far, probable learning disabilities, seems "bright kid," wants to learn, visual learner, wants to help him get tuned in to school	petit mal seizures?	continues to be hesitant--written and oral directions

Figure 9: Interview and report card comments.

the expectations" (FN's 3-11-82, p. 2). She further elaborated that most of the class was doing a "pretty good job" except for Mary, Joe, Steve, Neil, and Craig.

Of the five children mentioned above as not doing well, only Craig was referred for special education services. He was referred in October. In Figure 10 the "careers" of the eight children judged most troubling to Mrs. Meijer are displayed. The figure is based on her comments from interviews throughout the academic year. Both Steve and Joe were mentioned as being "target" children for referral yet were never referred. Neither Neil nor Mary was mentioned for referral. Pammy, the second child to be referred was not included by Mrs. Meijer in the group of children not able to meet her expectations in March. In Pammy's case the evidence seems to point toward factors other than academic ones. She was in the highest reading and math groups, but she rarely finished all of her seatwork. Craig, Pammy, and Neil had the family resemblances of "having it, but not being able to put it together." In other words, there was something about these children that made Mrs. Meijer feel that they had the ability to do the work she was assigning, yet they were unable to organize themselves or their thought processes in such a manner as to allow their abilities to come out in a way that made them successful in school. It can be seen in Figure 10 that only two of the eight children who were most troubling to Mrs. Meijer were actually referred for special education services. This indicates that she used referral to special education sparingly.

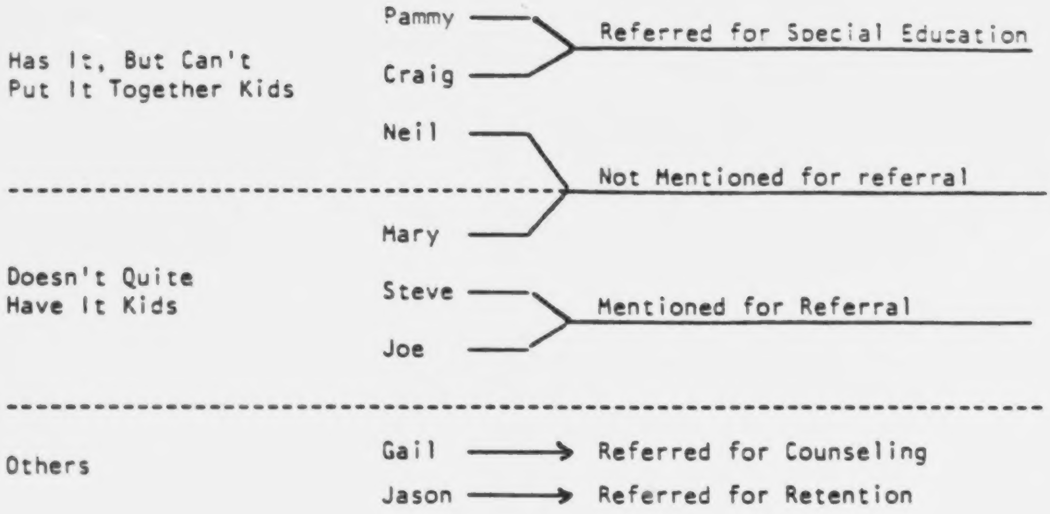

Has It, But Can't Put It Together Kids
Doesn't Quite Have It Kids
Others
Pammy
Craig
Neil
Mary
Steve
Joe
Gail
Jason
Referred for Special Education
Not Mentioned for referral
Mentioned for Referral
Referred for Counseling
Referred for Retention

Figure 10: Careers of children troubling to Mrs. Meijer.

On the other hand, Mrs. Meijer, as just mentioned, felt that Steve, Joe, and Mary lacked the capability to do much better than "C" work. On the October 1981 Stanford Achievement Tests (see Figure 11), Craig's stanine range (3-7) was the lowest of all six children. However, Joe, Steve, and Mary were not much ahead of him with stanine ranges of 4-7, 4-8, and 5-9, respectively. Mrs. Meijer's bright, withit children, Paul, Andrew, and Elizabeth, all had scores entirely in the high stanine ranges. Donald (5-9), Jessica (5-8), and Sarah (5-7) showed more variability but were all average or above in achievement. Complete Battery Totals for all children in the class can be found in Appendix G.

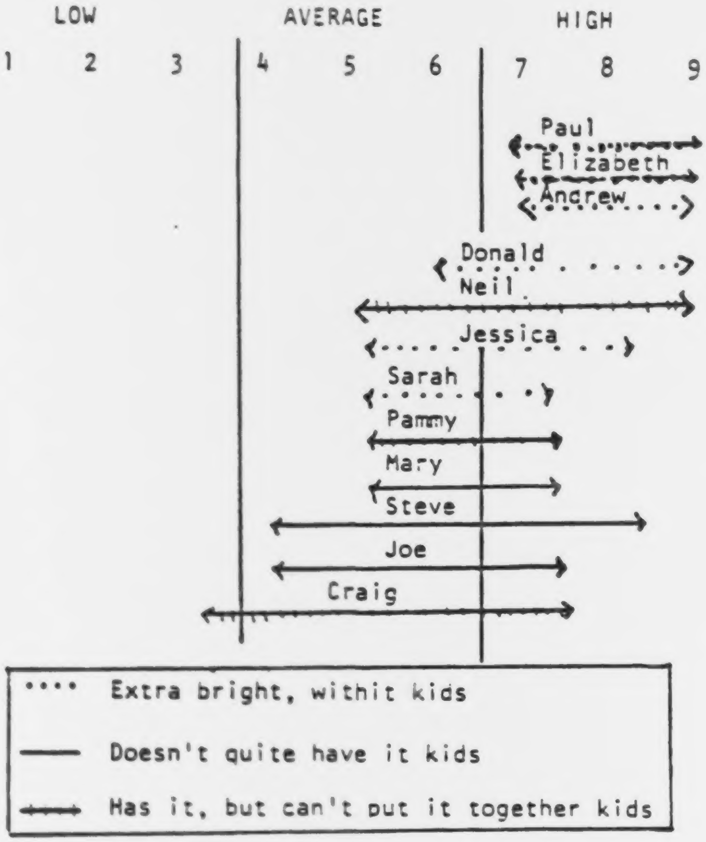


Figure 11: Stanford Achievement Test stanines for informal ability groups.

Not all children who pointed themselves out did so in ways that would cause a teacher to suspect that a special education referral was needed. Donald, Paul, and Andrew were far from being "model" students in class in terms of behavior. While not being in trouble with Mrs. Meijer as much as Craig or Neil, they certainly received more teacher reprimands over the course of the year than did such boys as Royce, Blake, or John from the average group.

The major differences between Donald, Paul, and Andrew on one hand, and Craig and Neil on the other, was that the former group were part of Mrs. Meijer's "extra bright and/or really withit" group of children as previously mentioned. On a qualitative level the misbehaviors of Donald, Paul, and Andrew were of a different nature in time and place than those of Craig and, to a lesser extent, Neil. The bright and withit boys may have been regarded differently because they managed, in spite of some silly behaviors at times, to get their work done. They participated appropriately during lesson times for the most part. They tended to get into trouble at unsupervised times, such as lining up, recess, and free time after their assignments were completed. They were also more adept at getting away with talking or sharing answers "behind the teacher's back" (Spencer-Hall, 1981) than the more "out-of-it children" like Craig, Steve, and Joe. They seemed to have both a sense of their own worth in the teacher's eyes and a sense of how far they could go with their inappropriate behavior before causing the teacher to become really angry with them.

An outsider (the researcher in this case) can be misled as to a child's abilities and achievements if she relies solely on the teacher's comments. This was apparent when we discussed the end-of-the-year reading scores in May. One of the boys whom I felt Mrs. Meijer included in her group of average children was John. His scores on the Stanford Achievement Test and the Gates McGinitie Reading Test placed him as one of the brightest children in the class. He had never been grouped with that set of children by Mrs. Meijer in her verbal discussions of the children with me.

I suspect that John's beginning-of-the-year crying outbursts and silliness kept Mrs. Meijer from including him in the withit group at first. He chose Jimmy as his best friend at the beginning of the year. Jimmy was a child who lacked self-control at times. Later in the year, John's best friend was Royce, a new boy to Pawnee School who was somewhat quiet and shy. John was on the fringe of the withit boys but was not really included in all of their activities.

It seemed that Mrs. Meijer had attributed certain social-emotional characteristics to John that overrode his high achievement scores. I expressed surprise at the end of the year when I saw his reading test results. John scored high grade equivalents in both vocabulary (5.6) and comprehension (5.7). I had placed him in the "average" group academically. Mrs. Meijer was surprised that I did not know what a good reader he was. She did not express surprise at seeing his scores but rather seemed to expect them to be high.

In two of the interviews (#5, 11-4-81 and #8, 1-14-82) Mrs. Meijer talked about a number of children who were not part of the process of coming together as a class. When she first talked about the class "not jelling," Gail and John were specifically mentioned as examples of how an individual child, or a few children, can disrupt the whole process. John had been in tears over a math assignment, and Gail continued to isolate herself from the rest of the children. Later, Mrs. Meijer implied that Steve, Craig, and Jimmy were also holding up the class's progress.

When the jelling issue was discussed again in January, Mrs. Meijer said that most of the class had jelled, but again she cited a number of children who were not part of the process. Steve, Joe, Mary, and Craig were lagging far behind in academics. John and Jason were described as having problems with immaturity. Neil and Gail were primarily behavior problems. Figure 12 shows the classroom standouts at these two times in the year when the issue of the class jelling was discussed.

It is interesting that neither Neil nor Pammy was included as part of the "not jelled" group in November. By January, Neil was included, but not Pammy. By January 14, Mrs. Meijer had already referred Craig and Pammy for special services and had included them, as well as Neil, in the "has it, but can't put it together" group. It is also interesting that even though more children (eight) were cited by Mrs. Meijer in January was not being part of the group, she made no further referrals of children for special education services that school year. When Figures 11 and 13 are compared, it can be further noted that even though John was listed both times in Figure 12 he was never one of the children considered for special education referral. Pammy, who was referred, was never listed as not meeting expectations in either November or January, as shown in Figure 12. This tends to support the notion that there was something more than failure to meet expectations that caused a student to be referred for special education.

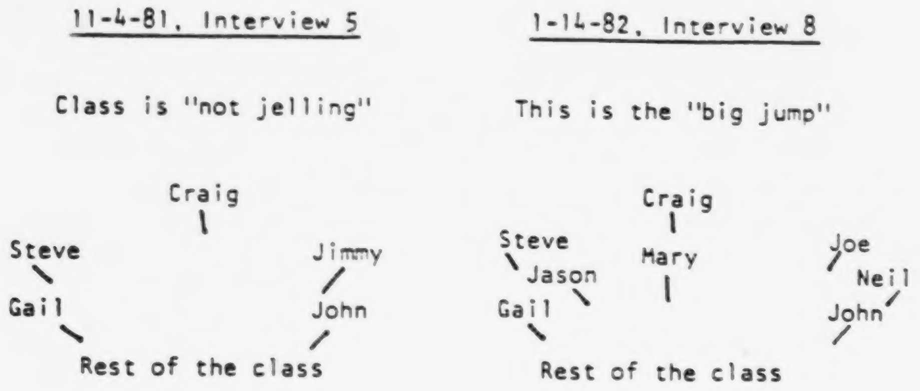

11-4-81, Interview 5
Class is "not jelling"
Craig
Steve
Jimmy
Gail
John
Rest of the class
1-14-82, Interview 8
This is the "big jump"
Craig
Steve
Jason
Mary
Joe
Neil
Gail
John
Rest of the class

Figure 12: Classroom standouts at two critical points in the year.

Setting Children Apart for Special Education Referral

I was particularly interested in the practical ways Mrs. Meijer set children apart for special education referral. I felt that by looking at the children she might refer, I would be able to determine what set these children apart from the others in the classroom. At the beginning of the study there was no way of knowing if the teacher would refer any children. There were several children who seemed to point themselves out to me from the opening day. As it turned out, Mrs. Meijer verbally targeted four (Craig, Pammy, Joe, Steve) of the 22 children in Room 125 for special education referral. She actually referred two (Craig and Pammy) children. One of them (Craig) was placed into special education classes for the learning disabled for the next school year, 1982-83. The other child (Pammy) was not placed into special education.

Both children whom Mrs. Meijer referred for special education were in the group of children she had labelled her "has it, but can't put it together kids." I decided to look closely at the data on this group of three children--Craig, Pammy, and Neil. Craig and Pammy were the ones who were referred for special education services. Craig, Pammy, and Neil were three very different children, yet Mrs. Meijer saw a commonality in all of them. Craig and Pammy were referred to special education as possibly being learning disabled. Mrs. Meijer's practical definition--"has it, but can't put it together"--perhaps better than any clinical characteristic best describes the puzzling condition that teachers face when they come across a child with learning disabilities.

Thumbnail sketches of the three children's characteristics are presented below. The descriptors are mainly my comments about the children, written as I observed them or as I thought about them later. The few words in quotation marks are Mrs. Meijer's words. Examples of each characteristic were found in the fieldnotes. I will present some of these in stories about each child.

> Craig--questioning; alert, yet out-of-it; dense; in one ear and out the other; smart; wants to be withit--Cub Scout, snowmobile; artistic ability.
>
> Pammy--absent-minded; insect lover, scientifically inclined; lonely; shunned by classmates, but doesn't seem to care; individualistic, not concerned with doing what others do.
>
> Neil--brooding; aggressive; "mousie" at times with teacher; mean, frequently copies others' work; shy about volunteering in class; "emotional things."

After noting the above characteristics of the three children, I went to the fieldnotes for the first weeks of the school year and took out observations written about these three children. These observations were chosen to show how the children were already setting themselves apart from their classmates. At the time I wrote the fieldnote observations that follow, school had been in session for two weeks and the children had settled into a routine. The children in the class were expected to take more responsibility for themselves now as Mrs. Meijer was busy getting her small groups organized for reading, math, and spelling.

> 9-17-81 Neil: Warned twice before 10 a.m. about his behavior. Mrs. Meijer mentions an "office" (his seat moved away from others) as a possibility for him. Told again about getting his seat changed.
>
> Pammy: Reads to herself in a corner during Rainy Day Recess. No interaction with other children. Has cabbage wedge for snack today. In art builds a "playground for lady bugs" out of craft straws.

9-18-81 Neil: Often stands while doing seatwork. Argues with Joe and is talked to several times in the morning by Mrs. Meijer for his behavior.

Pammy: Gets a teacher-imposed time limit to try to get her to complete her work.

Craig: Stands a lot to work at his seat. Asks to sharpen pencil at wrong time (during class, not before).

9-21-81 Neil: Is told to "focus" several times. Copying Donald's paper.

Craig: Does not pass papers over to the side of his row when directed. Mentioned as a "target" child. Asks for something to be repeated, and he is told to have his eyes and ears open. He seems excited when he notes that there are only 15 minutes left until he gets to go home.

Pammy: Mentioned as a "target" child. Shares excitement with Craig that there are only 15 minutes left until they get to go home.

The above notes show that these three children were already becoming objects of Mrs. Meijer's special attention. These early brief fieldnotes serve as an introduction. I will next go on to discuss the three children in a longitudinal way across the school year. I will look most closely at Craig since he was the one child who became eligible for special education services. This discussion will be followed by a look at Pammy, the other child who was formally referred. Next, a brief look at Neil will be given. Neil is included as an interesting contrast to Craig and Pam since he was in Mrs. Meijer's practical grouping of "has it, but can't put it together kids," yet was never referred for special education.

Earlier in this section I said that Mrs. Meijer verbally targeted four children for special education referral. These were: Craig, Pammy, Steve, and Joe. Since Steve and Joe were never referred, their cases will not be discussed in detail, but the reader may want to note them as they appear in some of the vignettes about other children. These two boys were part of Mrs. Meijer's group of "doesn't quite have it kids" (see Figure 13).

	"Has It,But Can't Put It Together Kids"		"Doesn't Quite Have It Kids"
	Neil		Mary
Referred:	Craig Pammy	Targeted for referral, but not referred:	Steve Joe

Figure 13: Children most troubling to Mrs. Meijer in the 1981-82 school year.

To study each of the three children in depth, I used the following process. First, I carefully went through the data corpus and examined all specific references to each child's behavior. These notes were then analyzed and categorized into the specific types of problems each was experiencing. Next, available pieces of videotape were studied to get a sense of the antecedents and consequences of behaviors in the context in which they occurred. Then, short vignettes were written to portray actions (rich description) and shorter, supporting pieces of data (thin description) were gathered. Portraits of Craig, Pammy, and Neil emerged that showed a shared "family resemblance" (the "has it, but can't put it together kids") as well as the particularistic attributes of each child. The family resemblances appeared to influence Mrs. Meijer's decision to set them apart as a group. The descriptions of the children to follow must be considered within the context of the entire group of children who were members of Room 125 that school year.

When the teacher went about using her personal skills of observation and practical reasoning, it was necessary to do this from an interactional perspective. She looked at the child individually, but she also had to think about how the child interacted with the other children in the class, with her as the teacher, and also how the child interacted with the curriculum and its materials. Being a successful second grader in Mrs. Meijer's class involved the ability to interact in several different types of classroom events. These events were: large group activities, where Mrs. Meijer presented a new concept, reviewed material already covered, and gave group directions or assignments; small group activities, such as reading and math groups; independent work times, seatwork and individual time needed to complete a small group assignment; teacher interaction times, when the children received help or when they were just talking with the teacher in face-to-face exchanges; and finally peer interaction times, before, during, and after class, on the playground, and in the lunchroom.

Getting a Special Education Identity: Craig

Craig was the first child referred for special education by Mrs. Meijer and the only child who was placed into special education from Mrs. Meijer's class in the 1981-82 school year. In this extensive description of Craig, stories and comments from all the major events involved in being a second grader in Mrs. Meijer's classroom are represented. This was done because Craig was the one child in the class who was eventually placed into a special education classroom for the mildly handicapped (LD) as a result of Mrs. Meijer's practical observation and reasoning skills. He was a standout from the first day of school. In fact, Mrs. Meijer knew a great deal about Craig before he entered her class. She knew that he had repeated kindergarten and had not had a very successful year in first grade. She knew that he had received help from the reading consultant in the past and that he would, no doubt, need it again this year. She did not refer him for special education immediately, nor did she indicate that she planned to. Rather, she viewed her task as his teacher to try to decide what his problem areas were and how she could best help him. Her first opportunity to observe Craig's behavior was in the large group context because this was the primary interactional stage at the beginning of the school year. Mrs. Meijer had gathered the children together on the floor by her rocking chair before their dismissal to go home. (Later in the year the children simply lined up, but in early September she made sure each knew what bus to take, had their bookbags or lunchboxes, and she made any announcements that needed to be made to all of them.) Note how Craig set himself apart in this example of his behavior in a large group activity.

Large Group Behavior

Lining Up to Go Home

> 3:15 p.m. It was time to go home on the first full Monday of the school year. The children were seated on the carpet at the back of the room and Mrs. Meijer was in her rocking chair. She directed everyone who brought their lunch box to line up. Nearly half the children got up and headed for the door. Mrs. Meijer next excused those who bought lunch in the cafeteria. All the rest of the children except one got up from the floor and went over toward the door. Mrs. Meijer had started to stand up when she noticed that Craig was still sitting on the floor, a bewildered look on his face. He appeared to be waiting. Mrs. Meijer asked, "What did you do for lunch today?" He answered that he had an egg sandwich. Mrs. Meijer waited and then said, "But you brought a sack, right?" Craig continued to sit until Mrs. Meijer went over and told him to join the other children in line to get on their buses. (VTN, 9-14-81)

At the time, Craig's mix-up did not seem remarkable. Yet looking back, it is a clear example of the types of problems in comprehending the nature of school tasks that surrounded him all year long. Didn't he hear Mrs. Meijer's directions? Was he unable to hear the difference between the sounds of bought and brought? Or was he confused because he brought a sack lunch rather than a lunch box and Mrs. Meijer had said, "lunch box" people line up. Other children who brought sack lunches (not lunch boxes) got up when the teacher said this. He was the only child left sitting on the floor at the conclusion of Mrs. Meijer's directions. Craig stood out from the other children on this fourth day of school. He had problems in taking directions or explanations in one situation and being able to transfer them to a similar situation when he encountered it. The videotape of this activity clearly shows the expectation on his face. Bringing a sack lunch was not the same to him as bringing a lunch box, nor was it the same as buying a cafeteria lunch to him. She gave two categories, but he appeared to be waiting for a third. Most of his classmates did not share this difficulty, at least consistently. The lack of ability to generalize (or transfer what he had learned in one situation) tended to bother Mrs. Meijer as the days and weeks wore on.

Craig's confusion in a large group over the nature of a social task, lining up, was shown in "Lining Up to Go Home." Another example of Craig's behavior during a large group lesson, this one on metrics, should exemplify the problems he showed above. This lesson came much later in the year. Mrs. Meijer's academic push was in full swing, and Craig's frustration at not being able to keep up was at its highest. For everyday math lessons Mrs. Meijer had two groups, but for metrics they all did the pages together as a group activity. The class was sitting on the floor with their math books and pencils. Mrs. Meijer was in her rocker.

Metric Measuring Lesson

> Mrs. Meijer began the lesson by directing the children to tear pages 139, 140, 142, 143, and 144 out of their books. As they began to tear out the pages,

> she reminded them to keep the pages in order because they would be stapling them together at the end. Craig had the first page in his hand and stopped. Mrs. Meijer said, "Tear it out Craig and keep right on tearing until you get to page 144." She next gave the class directions on how to show her they were ready to continue. Craig was the only child not ready to go on. They were asked to turn to page 140 as page 139 was "not expected" of them. Craig was on the wrong page, and Mrs. Meijer had to tell him specifically to turn to page 140. She finished explaining what they were to do on each page and then told them to punch out the measuring "sticks" from the back of their books. Craig managed acceptably with this task.
>
> The next eight to ten minutes were spent in measuring the different items called for on the pages. Mrs. Meijer walked around helping where needed. She went over to help Craig and noticed Steve on the wrong page. She told them that they would do page 141 together because it would be too hard to do alone. They were to measure some lines in units and Mrs. Meijer drew a sample on the board. They discussed the directions, and the children began to measure individually as Mrs. Meijer walked around helping. Craig looked on Karen's paper. About an hour after beginning the lesson, the children's workbook pages were stapled together, and the class all checked their answers at the same time. (FN's 3-11-82, p. 1)

In the fieldnotes I made no indication of the number of answers Craig, or any other child, got correct. The notes provide a record of the children who were not functioning appropriately during the lesson as they were singled out. Craig's problems seemed to be with comprehending the nature of the task rather than with being able to do the problems.

That afternoon after the children had gone, Mrs. Meijer said that Craig's measuring was fine. She explained, "He can do the skill that's required of him if he knows what to do." When I asked her about his performance during the metric lesson she said, "He couldn't follow. Wasn't on the right page. Didn't see where the picture...just didn't have those kinds of put it together things. Once Craig tore the page out of his book, he was completely lost" (FN's 3-11-82, p. 3). Mrs. Meijer said that Craig relied heavily on visual cues. She said that he had learned to compensate for his weak auditory skills by relying on his visual abilities and that "without a finger point [to the problem] he was completely lost" (FN's 3-11-92, p. 3). Her comments help develop the picture of a child who is lost without visible structure. Tearing out the three or four pages from their bound, ordered sequence in the book contributed to Craig's confusion in getting started. Once he got going, he apparently was able to complete the task.

According to Mrs. Meijer, one of Craig's biggest problems was not following directions. On his special education referral form (see Appendix H) she stated her concerns as difficulty with "memory tasks" and "understanding directions." She felt that Craig's difficulty with directions came in the understanding of what to do. She suspected that his short-term memory might be the problem. Another example from the fieldnotes, the first art lesson, may help to explain the manifestations of Craig's problem with directions.

Art is generally an exciting part of school life for most second graders. Mrs. Meijer explained to the eager children that they were going to be given a sheet of construction paper and some straws. They were to use their imaginations to make a design. She suggested that the straws could be stuck flat to the paper or stick up at any angle. Mrs. Meijer was standing in the middle of the rows of children, but to the outside, facing them as she gave directions.

An Eager Artist

> When she was ready for them to get their supplies, she said, "People in my back row, that are not lefties, may go get some scissors and a glue bottle for your row." Paul, Jimmy, and Jessica all got up and headed for the scissors can. Elizabeth stayed in her seat. She is left-handed.
>
> Mrs. Meijer was about to go on when she noticed that Craig was speedily on his way back to the supplies area. He had been sitting in the front row. She said to him, "Craig, are you in my front row?" Craig didn't say anything. He turned around with a sheepish-looking grin on his face. He started to head toward his desk, putting his left hand to his chin and then his right hand to his ear as he walked quickly back to his row. The rest of the children just watched him. Some were smiling. (FN's 9-17-81)

From where Mrs. Meijer was standing and directing her attention, Craig could possibly have thought that he was in the back row as his row was the farthest away from the scissors cans. Two pieces of evidence tend to dispute this, however. First, Mrs. Meijer had consistently referred to Craig's row as the first, or front row and to the other children's row as the fourth, or last row. This incident took place on the seventh day of school. Second, no other children from Craig's row moved toward the scissors, and all three children from the back row did get up. Three of the four back-row children were "withit, together kids." Did Craig truly think that in this instance he was in the back row, or could it have been the excitement of the first art lesson that caused him to rush forward before his row was called? As the year went on, Craig proved himself to be one of the most talented artists in the classroom. Was he not listening to Mrs. Meijer and tuning out on the "back row" portion of her direction? Again Craig "pointed himself out" in front of the whole class for not following directions.

In addition to having difficulty following directions in large group activities, Craig also had problems in small group activities and when he was working independently, such as during seatwork. Specific examples from the fieldnotes and videotapes will be pointed out. Also, examples of interactions with other children will be given. Several of the stories will point to cognitive-thinking strategies that he appeared to be using. These are included because it was Mrs. Meijer's feeling that Craig had the ability to do better and this was her main distinction between the "has it, but can't put it together kids" and the "doesn't quite have it kids."

Small Group Behavior

An examination of Craig's actions in reading and math group lessons may shed additional light on why he was the first child Mrs. Meijer referred for help.

Craig was in the Rainbows (Houghton-Mifflin, 1974) reading group, the middle of three groups in Room 125. The children took turns reading orally. Sarah was the only child praised for her reading this particular late-September day. Craig was told to use more excitement in his reading. (He usually read in a monotone.)

After the oral reading they were directed to do some workbook pages, and they all started to write except Craig. When Mrs. Meijer questioned him about why he was not working he said, "I didn't understand what do do" (FN's 9-30-81, p. 2). She helped him and next explained that they were to underline a certain picture on a page. When Mrs. Meijer reminded Neil to underline, Craig did too. This was one time that he was not caught for his inattention to the task at hand. He seemingly took a cue from a classmate.

Similarly, a couple of weeks later in math group I noted that all the children except Craig were watching Mrs. Meijer do a sample problem at the chalkboard. Later, he looked on Neil's paper to see what to do. At least three times during the lesson Craig had to be told what to do and how to do it. He did watch the next time that Mrs. Meijer demonstrated at the board. He was excused from math group to go to his seat at 9:56 a.m. but was again asking Mrs. Meijer for help at 9:59. She told him that she was not going to "spoonfeed" him anymore (FN's 10-13-81, p. 3).

Three months later Mrs. Meijer was still giving Craig extra help in his math group. She had called the Red Math Group back to the floor. She began to go over page 130 with them but noticed that Craig was not on the right page. She told him the page number as well as where to look on the page. She went over the general directions of what to do. They were to underline their answers. The problems had to do with the months of the year. Steve was sent back to his seat to get a pencil. Mary was counting from right to left, but wasn't observed by the teacher. Craig looked on Sarah's paper before he even tried to put down an answer. He was so busy figuring out the six months of the year that he forgot he was supposed to be underlining. He asked, "Do you circle it?"

Mrs. Meijer went over the rhyme of the months ("Thirty days has September...") and called the children's attention to the big calendar on the front bulletin board. They were to find out on what day of the week January had started. Steve could not name the day. Carrie could not do it either. Mrs. Meijer told them and went on to explain pages 104 and 105, which dealt with skip counting. She asked Steve to continue from "2-4-6." He did it and answered that he was counting by twos. Mrs. Meijer asked Craig to go on from "4-8-12." He did not get it. First he said, "8." Then, with a prompt, he said he was counting by fours. Carrie was unable to go on from "3-6-9," but Mary could. Mrs. Meijer helped Craig make an apostrophe as they had to write 2's, 4's, 3's on their worksheet to identify the counting patterns. Page 106 was explained, and then Mrs. Meijer gave the children time to complete the four pages on their own at their desks while she called up one of the reading groups.

Clearly, Craig was not the only one having difficulty in his math group this particular day. It is also clear that he had trouble both with remembering directions and grasping the concept of skip counting. These same difficulties in comprehending both the nature of the social task and the academic task involved were apparent when Craig was doing seatwork. One of the seatwork activities that the children had to do was "centers." Mrs. Meijer would set out six to eight self-instructing activities on a table for the children to do during the course of the week. They checked their name off on a master list after the activity was completed. They could do these activities in any order they wished.

Seatwork Behavior

Around Halloween Mrs. Meijer set out a ghost puzzle as one of the center activities. The pieces were in a box, but it was not the original box. There was no guiding picture of what the puzzle was supposed to look like when finished. There were quite a few medium- to small-sized pieces, and it looked to me like the finished puzzle would be about 5" x 7" in size.

The Ghost Puzzle

> It was mid-afternoon when Craig went up to the centers table and selected the puzzle. He took it back to his seat and dumped the pieces out on his desk. He tried to put some pieces together. He was not getting very far. When I asked him, he said that he was trying to start at the center of the puzzle. He seemed to have no strategy for fitting the pieces together. He tried to fit pieces together that had colors that didn't match. He did not try to fit the edge pieces together or to fit pieces that contained obvious parts of words. He soon gave up and put pieces back in the box. (FN's 10-21-81, p. 4)

Craig did not seem frustrated when he could not do the puzzle. When I told him about the strategy of looking for the edge pieces first, he did not seem the least bit interested. He had tried, but did not appear to be bothered by his inability to do the puzzle. The puzzle was like Craig himself. All the pieces were there, but it was difficult to put them together to make a whole. Instead of trying to put the puzzle together, Craig moved on to the next activity.

While Craig was trying to do the puzzle, Pammy was catching up on seatwork. Elizabeth, Karen, and Sarah were cleaning up the painting area after everyone had finished the day's art project. Andrew and Paul were back at the listening center. Mrs. Meijer had told the children to be sure to read the back board and to do what it said after they finished putting their skeleton bones (Halloween project) together. The back board directed them to finish today's boardwork. Several children, Craig and Joe among them, went directly on to centers instead of doing their boardwork. On many occasions throughout the year, Craig went on to free time or another activity when he had not finished his seatwork. Most of the time he was noticed and redirected by Mrs. Meijer. Sometimes he was not.

Is All of His Work Done?

> The listening center was a place reserved for children with all their seatwork completed. On February 3, at 15 minutes before lunch, Craig headed for the area. Was all of his work done? His being finished with seatwork early was out of character with his usual work pattern that had been observed for the past five months. My check of the wire baskets where the children placed their completed pages surprisingly turned up one of Craig's papers in each of the baskets. A close look at the quality of his work shed light on why he was done so quickly. (FN's 2-3-82, p. 2)

Figure 14 shows what Craig turned in for each of the five seatwork subjects that day and what the actual assignment had been. At this point in the year the academic "push" was on. Mrs. Meijer had just learned that Craig was not eligible for special education. A few weeks later she commented that Craig was not even trying anymore.

Subject	Assignment	Craig's Paper
Spelling	underline & capitalize	just underlined
Candy Page (worksheet)	alphabetize words & write a poem	no poem candy/candle incorrect
Journal	write about Ground Hog's Day	full of erasures "I wish that ther was no tosh they of the gond hoge"*
Reading Workbook	pp. 101 & 102	skipped one on page 101; others were correct, page 102 looked okay
Math	pp. 117 & 118 (with teacher)	pp. 115 & 116 okay, but these weren't assigned for today

*Likely translation: I wish that there was no such thing as the Ground Hog. (The Ground Hog had seen his shadow, and therefore according to legend there would be another six weeks of winter.) (FN's 2-3-82, p. 3)

Figure 14: A look at Craig's seatwork assignments for 2-3-82.

The previous notation of the incorrectness of Craig's work when he turned it in made me want to look for instances where I could actually observe Craig completing his seatwork. I remembered that a few days earlier I had watched Craig doing some math problems on his own, so I went back to the notes and videotape of the math boardwork of January 29. The day's math boardwork had been explained with examples at about 9:45 a.m. An hour later, after recess and snack, Craig began to do his problems. He and Royce and a few other boys were copying the problems from the board. Occasionally they looked as if they were pointing to specific problems and asking each other questions.

Math Boardwork

$$\begin{array}{lrrrr}
1. & 11 & 6 & 8 & 9 \\
 & \underline{+\ 6} & \underline{+\ 7} & \underline{+\ 4} & \underline{+\ 3} \\
 & & & & \\
2. & 15 & 12 & 9 & 5 \\
 & \underline{+11} & \underline{+\ 7} & \underline{+\ 8} & \underline{+13} \\
 & & & & \\
3. & 24 & 48 & 56 & 47 \\
 & \underline{+30} & \underline{+31} & \underline{+22} & \underline{+21}
\end{array}$$

(FN's 1-29-82, p. 2)

As I walked down the row behind the boys I noticed that Craig was working on the first problem in Row 3: 24 + 30. His method for doing the problem was as follows: First, he added 2 + 3 in the tens column and got 5. Then he added 4 + 0 in the ones column and got 4. His answer of 54 was correct, but his method of achieving it would ultimately lead to error in problems that required carrying (regrouping) in the ones column. It would have been interesting to see how Craig handled this. Some of the other children may have been using the same method as Craig, but it was not recorded in the fieldnotes.

Each of the settings just mentioned--large group, small group, and seatwork--was part of the interactional context set up by Mrs. Meijer. As has been noted, with each of these settings there were interactional tasks required of the children that caused problems for Craig. In the following pages, Craig's social interactions with the teacher and his peers will be examined. Would Craig's difficulties still be evident when the academic requirements were removed?

Interactions With the Teacher

A Day on the Floor

> The morning Upa-You-Body was over. Craig, Pammy, and Steve had been left standing twice, Judy once, and John three times. (Being left standing meant that a paper had not been turned in to the teacher). Andrew had just tattled on Neil for looking on Donald's paper. Mrs. Meijer was getting the class ready to go on to handwriting when she noticed Craig rocking in his chair. She told him to move to the floor to work.
>
> While the rest of the class went on with printing, Craig worked on spelling. He was asked to get a clipboard to write on, and by the time he was ready to start the handwriting the class had moved on to their journals. Craig was seated on the floor right in the path of the children who were coming back to the wire baskets to file completed papers. He did not move so they walked around him, or stepped over him, until Mrs. Meijer saw this and told him to move. He moved over to the group area of the carpet, and a few minutes later when Mrs. Meijer started math groups she had to sit by her desk. He was working on the last worksheet of the morning before finishing the others, coloring when he was not supposed to be. The morning went on. Group

> work was over and Mrs. Meijer moved to her desk. Students started to come up for individual help. Craig was in the way for the third time, and he still had to be told to move. (FN's 10-10-81)

Craig's inability to be perceptive about being in the way, or being in the wrong line, was problematic all year long. He would be told something once, or even twice, and still not be able to generalize, or apply it, to the same situation when it confronted him again. Mrs. Meijer said that usually a day on the floor cured the chair rocking, but "We'll see with Craig" (FN's 10-10-81, p. 3). She seemed to think that once would not be enough for him.

This problem with generalizing was also evident when Mrs. Meijer gave oral directions. One day in mid-October Mrs. Meijer gave the class a pretest on compound words. The test had been passed out, and she had explained what compound words were. When she asked if anyone was having problems, Craig raised his hand. His question was, "What are compound words?" Mrs. Meijer explained again and told them to underline the two parts. Craig said, "Do you circle it?" Mrs. Meijer asked him to repeat what she just said, but he did not at first. Finally he said, "Through it" (FN's 10-21-81, p. 5). Many times I wondered if he was behaving this way deliberately. Later in the day Mrs. Meijer said that she could tell by his face that he really did not remember what she said. "He's not processing," she concluded (FN's 10-21-81, p. 5). The special education resource room teacher was in the room observing Craig the same day. Mrs. Meijer said that the resource teacher could not have picked a better day to see the way he really is.

Another example of Craig's inability to judge a mood came on the first day that Mrs. Meijer turned over several of the children's messy desks. She had been trying to get them to keep their desks in order for several weeks. The children were out for afternoon recess and she caught sight of Neil's extremely messy desk. She went over and turned his desk down, spilling the contents on the floor. She also "dumped" the desks of Joe, Paul, Karen, Sarah, and Steve. When the class returned from recess they were surprised to see what had happened. There was a hush as the children looked around. Whispers of "she did it" could be heard coming from some of those who who had stayed in for recess.

There was a slight air of tension as the children waited for Mrs. Meijer to explain. Before she had a chance, Craig spoke up cheerfully and said, "Mine's all messy too. Do you want me to dump it too?" (FN's 11-3-81, p. 5). Mrs. Meijer told him that if she had wanted his desk dumped she would have done it. He misjudged the seriousness of the situation in the room, or perhaps he was trying to make light of it.

Craig also misjudged the social implications of occurrences on other occasions. Early in the same year, on the second day that videotaping was done in the class, was another example. As was to be expected when an outsider enters a classroom of second graders with a videotape recorder, camera, microphone, and a television monitor, there was much curiosity about the whole business. The teacher and I told the children what was going to happen, and Mrs. Meijer proceeded with the day's activities. The next day, however, Craig brought his own tape recorder to school. He was ready to capture the day's happenings for himself. He proudly came over and showed it to me. Then he placed it on his desk, running it for the other kids.

A Second-Grade Recorder

> When Mrs. Meijer noticed Craig with his tape recorder set up on his desk in the front row, she asked him to put the recorder inside his desk. It was distracting Craig and the other children around him. She said to Craig, "If that bothers your work today I'll have to put it on my desk till recess." Mrs. Meijer went on with her explanation of the morning's work and the day began. At about 10:50 a.m. Craig took the recorder out of his desk. Mrs. Meijer noticed him showing it to me, and he was asked to put the recorder on her desk, which he did, but he left the machine running.
>
> Periodically during the remainder of the morning Craig would run up to her desk and check the tape. He turned it on and off as they left and returned to the room. Mrs. Meijer did not appear to notice his activities until the children had gone to lunch. She played back some of the tape and was surprised to discover that the machine had recorded from inside the desk. She said that she was not about to let him take the tape home and do "goodness knows what" with it. So she erased the morning's recording during her lunch break.
>
> When Craig returned to class after lunch, he ran up to the teacher's desk, presumably to turn the recorder back on, but found it missing. He ran over to Mrs. Meijer and questioned her as to its whereabouts. She told him that it was in her closet and that he could get it after school. She told him that she had not given him permission to record the class. Her explanation seemed to satisfy him, and no more mention of the tape recorder was made until about five minutes before bus time when Mrs. Meijer got the recorder out of her closet. Craig saw her and ran over and tried to take it from her without asking. He was directed to sit down at his desk. The recorder was handed to him as he walked out the door to get on his bus, and that was the last I heard of the recording venture. (FN's 9-5-81, p. 1)

This example points out what I considered to be one of Craig's strengths that at the same time was one of his weaknesses. He was aware and excited about what was going on, his recording in this case, but he became carried away with what he was doing to the point of getting himself reprimanded by Mrs. Meijer for continuing to record after she had asked him to put the recorder on her desk.

Before I move on to Craig's relationships with his peers, one further example of his inability to size up the social situation in the classroom will be presented. It happened on a day when there was a slight change in the established routine that had evolved around the use of the computer in the classroom.

Integration Skills

> It was a hectic Tuesday in Room 125. It was the class's day to have the microcomputer in their room. (At the time of the study the school had two machines to share among all the classes.) It was also library day. Usually Mrs. Meijer left the computer in the room and when the class returned to the room the children resumed turns. This particular day, however, she decided to wheel the whole computer cart down to the library. She wanted the children to go right on with their turns when they were not selecting books.
>
> Mrs. Meijer had not made an announcement to the class about her plan, but it seemed obvious what she had in mind when she pushed the heavy cart down the hall and set it up in the library. After it was ready to go she called John over to take his turn. John took his turn at the computer and went over and tapped Craig, who was next on the list. Craig stopped what he was doing. He walked back to the classroom and passed right by the computer. Mrs. Meijer noticed that no one was using the computer and was checking into it when Craig came back from the classroom with a puzzled look on his face. Mrs. Meijer got him started on the program and went on to help other children select books. (FN's 3-2-82)

Mrs. Meijer used this incident later as an example of Craig's "lack of integration skills" (FN's 3-2-82, p. 3). It also seems to point to his difficulty with social perception, as noted previously. One might assume that by second grade, when a child sees his teacher push a cart loaded with a microcomputer down to the library, he would realize it was to be used there. No other children were observed going back to the room to use the computer. In addition, Craig was not the first child called up to work on the machine. In this instance, he seemed oblivious to the surroundings. On some occasions Craig was able to observe other children's behavior and to imitate it. Not this time.

Interactions With Peers

With his peers Craig remained pretty much on the fringe of the "gang of boys" that existed in Mrs. Meijer's room. The other children accepted him but did not go out of their way to include him. Craig would also join in with the boys' sports at recess. He huddled with them in the halls and at breaks and was not an outcast by any means. The class appeared to accept him for what he was, with tolerance and little malice.

The only observed act of a hostile nature directed toward Craig occurred at the beginning of afternoon activities one day in March. The children were sitting down around Mrs. Meijer for their story. John came in and jumped on Craig's foot. This type of behavior was very unusual for the class, and Mrs. Meijer immediately asked John why he would do such a thing. At first

John said nothing. He looked quite upset by Mrs. Meijer's question. He finally said, "See, Craig keeps trying to sit with us and I don't want him to sit by us!" (FN's 3-16-82, p. 1). Mrs. Meijer talked about that not being a good reason to jump on him. Craig looked surprised and a little hurt by the incident but didn't say or do anything, and Mrs. Meijer went on reading the story.

There were several times throughout the year when the class would react to Craig's behavior before Mrs. Meijer did. Once in a science lesson the class was experimenting with what happened to light rays when a flashlight beam was directed in different angles. Mrs. Meijer had to keep telling a few of the children to quit leaning forward to see because they were blocking the beam's path. Finally, she had warned them enough and said that the next time anyone did it that would be the end of the experiment. On the very next trial, Craig started leaning out into the middle. This time it was his classmates who yelled out, "Craigie, Craigie" (FN's 11-10-81, p. 2).

On another occasion when the class was across the hall in the other second-grade teacher's room for social studies, Craig got up twice with the wrong row of children. The second time it happened several children yelled out, "Craigie, you're in Row 1" (FN's 10-1-81, p. 5). There was no other child in the class who invoked this type of reaction from the other children. The principal of the school called him "Craigie" and so did his mother when she was at school helping out with puppet making one day. Craig is not a name that usually gets made into a diminutive like Jim or John. Even though he was one of the oldest boys in the class due to his retention in kindergarten, he was physically small and was treated like he was younger, or less responsible, by almost everyone, including his Cub Scout leader, as will be obvious in the following paragraphs.

Interactions Outside the Classroom

I did not have much evidence in the fieldnotes about Craig's competence outside the classroom, but I had wondered if he was the type of child who would seem more "normal" in nonschool activities and only show his learning disabilities in school (see Cole & Traupmann, 1980, for further discussion of a learning disabled child in nonschool contexts). I had observed Craig trying to help Paul with a Cub Scout activity in the hall one morning before school. Craig told Paul that his mother was supposed to sign the activity after he completed it. Then Paul asked Craig if he knew what to do for the religious activity. Craig said no, but he showed off his three activity beads that were sewn on his Cub Scout jacket. I decided to try to gather some evidence on his behavior in Scouts because I suspected that perhaps this was Craig's area to shine.

Just a little over a month later, while the children were with the other second-grade teacher for a film, an opportunity presented itself. Mrs. Meijer and I were talking in her classroom when the school librarian came down to the class. She brought a message from the Cub Scout leader: Mrs. Meijer was to announce to the boys that there would not be a meeting today. The Scout leader had told the librarian to tell Mrs. Meijer to "look Craig in the eyes" and tell him to go home after school (FN's 2-23-82, p. 2). Mrs. Meijer asked the librarian to repeat it. There was no special message for any of the other boys. It seemed that even the Cub Scout leader believed that Craig was a child who had to be told something directly; she had set him apart from the other boys too. Craig seemed competent in scouting activities, earning beads, and even trying to help others, but he had trouble following directions outside, as well as inside, the classroom. Admittedly, this one instance is too incomplete a base on which to characterize his entire out-of-classroom interactional performance. Nevertheless, there does seem to be enough evidence to state firmly that the Cub Scout leader had also set Craig apart from the other boys in her troop.

Craig: A Summary

It should be clear that Craig had difficulty across all the interactional-event settings in Mrs. Meijer's room. His case has been fully described here because he was the one child in the room who achieved the status of obtaining a special education identity. The actual procedural data on how this came about will be discussed later in the chapter. At the beginning of the year it was Craig's "family resemblance" to other children with problems whom Mrs. Meijer had known in the past that had earned him a spot in the set of "target children." Switching from her role as a teacher to that of a gatekeeper, it appeared that it was the universal, pervasive difficulties that Craig displayed in all of the classroom events that I identified in Mrs. Meijer's second-grade class that helped her make the decision to refer him for special education services.

Craig was a second grader who wanted to do well but lacked basic skills in reading and math. In addition, he lacked skill in comprehending the nature of tasks asked of him across the classroom contexts. He had difficulty following directions, was slow in getting started, and was impulsive when responding to the teacher's questions. He seemed alert and smart at times yet out-of-it and dense at other times. This section on Craig concludes with a list of Craig's strengths and weaknesses (see Figure 15) as noted throughout the year. The list is taken from the fieldnotes and from interviews with Mrs. Meijer.

Pam: Left to Her Own Devices

The second child referred for special education evaluation by Mrs. Meijer was Pam. Unlike Craig, who seemed to stand out in the activities of the class, Pam blended into the background, almost to the point of seeming to be withdrawn. At times Pam could be working on something in the midst of a crowd of children and not pay any attention to them. It was almost as if she were in her own little world. Often she had to make up her schoolwork during recess or free time when she should have been interacting with

Date	Notation
9-10	can't follow directions, either out to lunch, or tuning out
9-30	questions everything
10-5	inability to follow more than one direction, inability to stay on task, kindergarten repeater, primer reader, doesn't know basic math facts to "10," visual learner
10-6	adjustment problems every year so far, bright kid, wants to see all there is to see, tries, wants to learn, to do well, auditory processing problems
10-21	not processing
12-8	can't organize to begin, not a self-starter, can only concentrate on one thing at a time, meticulous
1-29	does 2-column addition incorrectly
2-2	reversals and inversions in his reading, difficulty in conceptualizing, has learned to compensate, one-to-one he can read, anxiety, habitual problems, questioning, clears throat under stress
2-3	no longer trying, reading not valued at home
2-9	eager to do well, not getting anything from the reading act, can't put the big picture together
3-2	is learning, has basic skills, problem in performing a task with more than one step (these comments from school psychologist), difficulty with writing skills (like journal), difficulty going from "tool" learning to application of "tools," no integration skills, copies other kids' work
3-11	won't try anymore, can do skill if he knows what to do, difficulty following, being on right page, lacks put-it-together skills, relies on visual, depressed at having to sit away from other kids, making negative comments about his schoolwork, not developmentally ready for carrying in math, likes artsy stuff, can't process what's expected of him, particularly the auditory
3-23	wonders about petit mal seizures, fixed stare (above from the reading teacher)
5-26	EEG was normal, needs 1:1 attention to succeed

Figure 15: Summary of Craig's strengths and weaknesses.

classmates. Pam had a particularly difficult time completing her seatwork. Mrs. Meijer explained the four to six daily activities at the beginning of the morning and then she expected the children to do them independently in order as she worked with her various groups. By mid-September it was obvious to Mrs. Meijer that Pammy was one of the children who was having trouble getting the daily work done. When seatwork was checked at the Upa-You-Body time of the day, Pammy was usually left standing at least once every day. In the following story an incident is described where Pammy was isolated from the other children by Mrs. Meijer. Notice that other children are working alone and completing assignments while Pam is still on the first assignment near the end of the afternoon. Notice what she does after she is sent to the corner to work on her story by herself.

My Tooth Story

> In mid-September Mrs. Meijer had her second graders write a story about teeth for Dental Health Week. After story time she explained what they were to write about. She told them to title their story, "My Tooth Story." Before they could start to write the story they had to make their spelling dictionaries. At 2 p.m. the first children to finish the dictionaries were given paper for "My Tooth Story." This was 35 minutes after Mrs. Meijer had given directions. By 2:10 Donald, Jimmy, Paul, and Jessica were finished with both tasks and off to other activities.
>
> After recess (2:20 to 2:40) Mrs. Meijer demonstrated the day's art project, leaf rubbings. At 2:50 the class was told that the tooth story must be finished before they could go on to the art project. Mrs. Meijer was at the small table helping students with the spelling of difficult words. She called Pam to come back to the table with her spelling dictionary. She saw that Pam was still finishing up on the dictionary and hadn't even started her tooth story. Mrs. Meijer said to Pam, "This

[tooth story] is your next focus. Go get your pencil." Mrs. Meijer sent Pam to the free-reading corner table to complete her story.

Pam went to the corner and sat down, but then stood up again and leaned forward as if to take a few steps toward the main part of the room. She stopped, appeared to be deciding if she should go, and then tentatively ran to her desk and came back a few seconds later with her spelling dictionary in her hand. This had taken almost two minutes. She finally sat down, scooted the chair up to the table, looked at the paper in front of her, then looked away to her left at the bulletin board. Next she put her pencil up to her head then to her hair, shaking her right leg all the while. Another minute had gone by as she flicked her pencil under her chin while looking at the bulletin board. She finally turned to her work again, sighed visibly, scooted her chair up and stopped, scooted back, stood up and turned toward where Mrs. Meijer was standing. Pam talked to herself, pointed her finger sternly as if she was mimicking someone saying, "Sit down here," and then she sat back down, still mumbling.

Four and a half minutes had now passed since Mrs. Meijer sent Pam to the corner, and she still had not begun to write. She looked at her paper again for five seconds, looked at the bulletin board, glanced at what the rest of the class was doing, and then looked back at the bulletin board. Sarah came over to the corner to get a book and Pam returned to her story, but still did not write anything.

Almost a minute later Pam went up to get spelling help from the teacher. She asked Mrs. Meijer to spell "once upon a time." Mrs. Meijer told Pam that she would write "once" for her but that she was sure that Pam knew how to spell "up" and "on" and could put them together. Mrs. Meijer walked away carrying Pam's spelling dictionary. Pam and Mary (also waiting for help) followed her. Pam went back to the corner to work. Two minutes later she came back up to Mrs. Meijer to get more help. She had to wait a full minute for the teacher to help two boys who were there before her. At 3:10 Mrs. Meijer told the class to clean up to go home, and Pam headed back for the corner to work on her story. Finally, eight minutes and 40 seconds after being told to go to the corner, Pam gave her tooth story to Mrs. Meijer. She was told to put her name on it and put it with the others. (FN's 9-15-81)

Unfortunately, a copy of Pam's final effort is not available. The fieldnotes make it clear, however, that she finished her tooth story that day. This incident was recorded on videotape and later studied after Pam was referred for special education. Originally, I chose to film Pam because I had observed how hard it was for her to concentrate on her seatwork when the teacher was not directing her in a lesson. In the nearly nine minutes that she was in the reading corner, Pam actually spent less than four minutes on the writing of the story. It was apparent in the videotape that she did not sit and concentrate on this task. Most of the other children finished nearly 45 minutes before she did. She never got to the art project and never finished coloring her spelling dictionary. The specified times in this long vignette are exact times.

I presume that Mrs. Meijer isolated Pam to help her concentrate. She wanted to keep Pam away from the distractions of the other children doing their leaf rubbings and moving about. Pam did not work on her story even in the corner where she was alone. She looked all around, flicked her hair and face with her pencil, moved her feet and legs, and got up and down several times. This pattern repeated itself many times over the course of the school year and was a contributing factor to Pam's having to stay inside during recess many days to complete her work, even though she was one of the better readers in the class. Only one other top-reading-group child, Gail, consistently missed recess. She had different problems that hindered her completion of the work.

Mrs. Meijer said that she knew Pam had trouble completing tasks the previous year as well because she had talked to her first-grade teacher. Mrs. Meijer wondered if Pam could possibly have a "far-point copying" problem. She meant that Pam was unable to look at something on the chalkboard and to copy it on her own paper correctly. This task involves short-term memory also. Was it the "connection from what she thinks and what she can produce...or...just hand coordination?" asked Mrs. Meijer (FN's 9-22-81, p. 3). By the third week of school, Mrs. Meijer was trying to diagnose Pam's difficulties and had made careful observations of her difficulties.

During a science lesson in early December, Pam was chosen by Mrs. Meijer to portray the sun in a demonstration. In a viewing session of this lesson held later, Mrs. Meijer noted Pam's quickness in responding to many of her questions and statements. She said that Pam often looks like she is not paying attention when she really is. Several examples of this behavior will follow in the "Things in Space" vignette. Mrs. Meijer commented that Pam is "pretty much on task when we have group discussion. It's when she's left to her own devices that there's a problem" (FN's 12-8-81, p. 3).

Things in Space

> "What do we call the place where the earth and stars are?" asked Mrs. Meijer during an afternoon science lesson. When no one raised a hand to volunteer an answer, she called on Elizabeth, one of the most reliable of the children. Elizabeth tried, but did not come up with the answer Mrs. Meijer wanted. Sitting a few seats away from Elizabeth, Pam mouthed the word

> "space," but made no attempt to volunteer. Mrs. Meijer appeared to see Pam and called on her. Pam started to raise her hand as she was called on, then said, "Space." Mrs. Meijer said, "Correct," and went on talking about things spinning in space. As she said this Pam spun her hand and went, "Whirr, whirr," under her breath. The lesson continued on and Pam played with the recording vest that she was wearing for the videotaping, talked to Jason, who kept turning around to talk to her, and put her finger in and out of her mouth.
>
> About ten minutes after Mrs. Meijer had asked the question about space, she called for Royce to be a model of the earth and Pam to be a model of the sun. Pam was given a kick ball to hold as the sun. She giggled and seemed pleased to be chosen. Royce was given the globe for his model of the earth. Mrs. Meijer asked the class what was wrong with the model of the sun. When no one responded, she called on Pam. Pam replied, "It's smaller than the earth." Mrs. Meijer said, "What do you know about the sun?" Pammy responded, "It's supposed to be very bigger than the earth." Mrs. Meijer went on to explain to the class that she would have had to have given Pam the big Indian rubber ball from the gym if the model was going to be realistic. As she said this, Pam buckled her knees under her as if the small ball she was holding were now a much larger and heavier ball.
>
> Mrs. Meijer then had the children look in their science books at the picture of the children doing the experiment. They were balancing the balls on their heads. Pammy immediately put her kick ball on her head and then turned to Royce, who was still standing and holding his earth model in front of him. He copied her and put his on his head. Pam giggled as Mrs. Meijer asked them to show the others how the model worked.
>
> The whole experiment lasted four minutes, after which Pam and Royce were sent back to their seats. Pam had a big smile on her face as she sat back down in her desk. The Things in Space science lesson continued. (FN's 12-1-81)

This brief episode illustrates Pam's ability to comprehend cognitive content while at the same time physically appearing as if she was not paying much attention. In the viewing session of the above lesson Mrs. Meijer said, "Sometimes it's funny, because you think she might not be paying attention when she really is. Like she responded with the globe so quickly there" (FN's 12-8-81, p. 3). Mrs. Meijer was speaking of Pam placing the kickball on her head.

The writing of the tooth story, described earlier in this section, is an example of what happened to Pam when she was "left to her own devices." She was distractible, but as Mrs. Meijer put it, it was an "inner distraction." She exhibited an "unattending behavior personality" (FN's 9-30-81, p. 11). Mrs. Meijer said that Pam tended to see details but couldn't put the whole thing together. For Pam, the source of her problems as a learner seemed to come from inside her.

In January Mrs. Meijer began teaching the children cursive writing. Mrs. Meijer would write the day's letters on the chalkboard; she also had a chart that she placed about midway in the class for those in the back row to see. The children had to copy their letters from either the board or the chart. Pam had a very difficult time with cursive writing. Sometimes she tried to do another assignment when the class was practicing the day's letters, or she would try to cover her work if an adult walked by. Her paper was often full of erasures and rips. Mrs. Meijer had suggested to her parents that they work on handwriting at home with her. Another time, Pam was heard whining about a lost paper when it was time for handwriting. This was unusual behavior for her. She had not previously been seen as a complaining child. When she finally found her paper it was torn and full of erasures even though the children had been told that since these papers were for practice, they did not have to erase mistakes. Her problems with cursive writing continued throughout the school year.

With Pam, more so than with Craig or Neil, Mrs. Meijer was concerned about possible physiological deterrents to learning. In mid-year Pam's pediatrician discovered that she had a severe allergy to peanuts. The doctor had found an excess of some chemical in her body, and he placed her on a special diet for a month at the end of February. Mrs. Meijer was concerned that this strict diet would set Pam even further apart from the other children. Mrs. Meijer saw Pam as being different from the others in other ways, too. She told me that Pam's hair style (short and shaggy), sloppy cowboy boots, and clothes from Sears (never any designer clothes or brands from specialty shops, FN's 2-18-82, p. 2) contributed to her lack of friends. The school counselor told Mrs. Meijer that she was going to suggest a pet to Pam's parents, but the diet made it impossible. She could not go over to her best friend's house because the friend had a new dog. Other kinds of physical indicators of ill health that Mrs. Meijer noted during the year were dark circles under her eyes, asthma attacks (reported from home, not at school), and a general lack of alertness that is usually not seen in a healthy seven year old.

Mrs. Meijer seemed to feel that a great deal of Pam's difficulty was caused by her parents. She felt that Pam's parents were "well-meaning" but that they didn't know "how to parent"

(FN's 2-18-82, p. 2). She cited several examples in support of this statement. In first grade, Pam's parents put the house key on a chain around her neck. She had to let herself in the house after school because they both worked. Mrs. Meijer felt that Pam was too young to have this responsibility. The principal told Mrs. Meijer that Pam's father was surprised at the suggestion that he read stories to Pam. She was an only child and was alone much of the time at home. She had many interests, but they tended to be of a solitary nature and were science oriented, such as collecting insects and stones.

Even though Pam was not placed into special education, a recommendation was made by the building team for her to see the school social worker. The team felt that she needed counseling about her peer relationships. The social worker developed a group that included Pam and three girls of her choosing from the class. By March 11, Pam's counseling group had met twice and Mrs. Meijer reported that it seemed to be going well. Pam had to find out something she did not know about someone else, and Mrs. Meijer overheard her asking another child. They had seen a movie about friends in the group. Pam had started to participate in class discussions again.

The fieldnotes do not contain as much information on Pam as there is on Craig, but she was also clearly a child who Mrs. Meijer felt needed extra attention and encouragement. Pam tended to withdraw into herself rather than interact with peers or her teacher. Craig, on the other hand, was continuously interacting with peers and teachers. Both of these children were referred for special education services by Mrs. Meijer and both were seen as "having it, but not being able to put it together."

Pam: A Summary

The difference between Pam's problems and Craig's should be apparent to the reader now after reading the stories and comments about both children. The two had been put in the informal group of "has it, but can't put it together" children at the beginning of the year. Whereas Craig seemed to be happy and outgoing, Pam seemed unhappy and withdrawn from classroom interactions. On a one-to-one basis she was very talkative, although the teacher rarely got to see this side of Pam. Although Pam was in the highest reading and math groups, she was not turning in all of her seatwork assignments.

The comments are meant to give the reader an idea of Pam's interactional difficulties. Mrs. Meijer worried about Pam because she felt that Pam was too different from the other girls to be able to make friends with them. Mrs. Meijer mentioned things like Pam's dress, hair style, and her diet as being problem areas.

The two fieldnote stories about Pam contrast her behavior in an independent activity--writing a story for Dental Health Week--and in a group activity--the "Things in Space" lesson. Mrs. Meijer decided, after careful observation, that it was when Pam was "left to her own devices" that there were problems. She reasoned that these problems seemed to come from an "inner distraction" and, as such, Mrs. Meijer referred Pam to the special education team as a mildly handicapped child. Mrs. Meijer was able to use her observational and practical-reasoning skills to see a child who had high ability but was not achieving school success primarily due to interactional difficulties of a social nature rather than to any lack of academic ability.

Neil: Not Referred, No Discrepancy

The third member of this trio, Neil, was not referred for special education by Mrs. Meijer. His story is being presented as a contrast case to those of the other two children in the "has it, but can't put it together" group. If Pam's distinction was that she was inner-directed and Craig's was that he was outer-directed, what was Neil's distinction? What was his "family resemblance" to Craig and Pam in Mrs. Meijer's mind? Why were Craig and Pam referred for special education and not Neil? Mrs. Meijer was concerned about Neil's lack of academic progress as well as that of Craig and Pam. I looked at Neil's cumulative records for his educational history. He had been referred for special education in first grade (3-23-81) but apparently he was not placed. There was no Individualized Educational Program (IEP) in his school records to indicate special education placement. Mrs. Meijer had never mentioned that Neil had been in special education. The evidence indicates that he had not.

It was noted previously in this report that both Pam and Craig stuck out in the first days of school as being children portraying profiles of inappropriateness. In his own way Neil, the third member of the "has it, but can't put it together" children, also stood out in those early days. He was one of the children chosen to be a helper by Mrs. Meijer on the first day of school. She said that she had deliberately chosen children for helpers on the first day of school because she wanted to get to know some of them quickly based on what she knew about them from last year. That same day, when the principal came in to the classroom with the superintendent to welcome the children back, he asked a question of Neil specifically. The only other child the principal directly called upon by name was Craig. This seemed to indicate the principal's familiarity with these two boys in particular. Apparently, the principal also set these two boys apart in his mind, although his calling on these two boys may have been a coincidence.

The first task the children were asked to perform independently the first day was to make a name tag for themselves. Mrs. Meijer had laid out index cards and colored marking pens at the small table. Neil was playing with the markers instead of using them to complete his name tag, and Mrs. Meijer had to speak to him about it. Finally she had to ask him to leave the table because he had spent more than enough time there to complete the project and still was not done.

Mrs. Meijer noticed that Neil had gotten out of his seat many times on the first day. The second day of school, she changed Neil's desk from the center of his group of three to the inside, on the aisle. His desk was moved many more times throughout the year in an attempt to find a productive spot for him. Mrs. Meijer told me that Neil was "disruptive." He often turned around in his seat and bothered other children. Neither Craig nor Pam was ever labeled disruptive in this sense.

Mrs. Meijer planned to discuss some of the "emotional things" about Neil with his parents at the November 18 parent-teacher conferences. She said that his cumulative school file indicated that he frequently hit other children. Neil's parents were scheduled for a double conference (40 minutes), and they ended up staying even longer. His parents seemed to feel that Neil's past teachers had been "out for him," and they were afraid his future teachers would be too. Neil had swim team practice four nights a week and took piano lessons. Both of these activities were private, not part of the school program. Mrs. Meijer felt that he lashed out at school because he did not have any way of getting "rid of some of his hyperness" (sic) at home. His home time was very structured. Mrs. Meijer told Neil's parents that she felt Neil wanted to perform but was unable to. Mrs. Meijer suggested the possibility of Neil's seeing the school counselor to help him work out some of his problems. His parents told Mrs. Meijer that they would think about this and let her know after Thanksgiving break. Apparently they decided not to follow up on Mrs. Meijer's suggestion of counseling for Neil as no further mention was made of it.

Several times in the fall, Mrs. Meijer described Neil as a "nonfocusing" child. According to her early definition of focusing, a child was to look at her and pay attention when she was explaining assignments. Neil was more apt to be turned toward a neighbor or looking off in the distance than to be looking directly at the teacher. Many times he even appeared to avoid eye contact with her.

By January, Mrs. Meijer felt that Neil had "done some improving" (FN's 1-14-82, p. 4) in the classroom but that his hall and playground behavior had not gotten any better. She had discussed this with Neil's mother. On February 3, Mrs. Meijer said she had to "collar" Neil for spitting on some fifth graders. Neil's behavior often seemed impulsive, as with the spitting. His classroom performance often seemed impulsive, as the story to follow will show.

After the Christmas holidays, Neil began to appear in the fieldnotes more frequently even though Mrs. Meijer felt that he was improving. I often stood behind the cubbies to write when I was in the room. Neil's desk had been moved to the end of this piece of furniture, apart from the other children. As I stood there, I often noted that Neil read directions out loud to himself before he did an assignment. On February 3, all the children had to do a worksheet that Mrs. Meijer called the "Candy Page" (see Appendix F). This worksheet dealt with alphabetical order. The children were to help the candy maker get his Valentine's Day sweets ready.

> The Candy Page
>
> There was a "candy box" with 12 empty spaces at the top with words written on them. The words were: love, face, candy, Valentine, kiss, handle, lace, candle, heart, dandy, mine, and dove. The children were to cut out the candies and paste them in the candy box in alphabetical order. They were to write a Valentine poem using the rhyming words from the candy box. To do this assignment Neil's strategy was as follows. (1) He cut out all the "candies." (2) He laid them all out on his desk. (3) He read the directions aloud to himself. (4) He started saying the alphabet "a," "b," "c," and after each letter he paused and looked for a word beginning with that letter. (5) He found a word that fit, put a huge glob of glue on the back of it, and pressed it down on the space. (6) After sticking down several words, he ran over to the wire basket containing the worksheets that other children had already finished and filed. He looked at some of them, then ran back to his seat. (7) He realized that he had made a mistake with the "c" words by not noticing that there were two of them before he went on to the letter "d". He ripped the misplaced words off the page and started rearranging his "candy" words. About 30 minutes later, Mrs. Meijer saw him looking at some other children's papers again and told him not to do it anymore. (8) Neil took his page back to his desk and started writing his poem on the back of the paper. (FN's 2-3-82, p. 3)

This episode demonstrates Neil's strategy for doing the assignment. Up to a point his strategy was a good one. His problem may have been that he was not used to having more than one word begin with the same letter, or perhaps he simply did not look closely enough at the 12 words before he spotted "candy" and stuck it down. As he quickly went through the alphabet, he glued down the first word he came to with the alphabet letter he was working on instead of checking to see if there were other words that started with the same letter. The episode also seems to demonstrate that Neil cared about completing his work correctly. At least two times as he was working, he ran back to check the papers of those who were already done with the Candy Page. The first time he checked he saw that he had made a mistake by going on to the "d" words, and he was able to return to his seat and correct his own error.

Mrs. Meijer had a lengthy conference with Neil's parents on February 18. They were upset about his report card and had asked for a conference with the principal and Mrs. Meijer. They started the meeting by asking the principal if he had seen Neil's report card. He told them that he and Mrs. Meijer had written it together so he was well aware of its contents. Neil's parents told him that they had hired a private psychologist to work with Neil. They were again offered the services of the school counselor, and again said that they would consider it. Mrs. Meijer came away from the meeting with the distinct opinion that the parents did not think much of her as a teacher. She said that she learned about Neil's family life from listening to his parents talk. She said that he was under constant parental supervision. His father sat with him every night as he practiced the piano. Mrs. Meijer got the impression that the parents did not agree on child-rearing practices. She said that several times the father deferred a question to the mother, notably about going to see a psychologist. Mrs. Meijer said that Neil's brother was having a hard time, according to his kindergarten teacher.

On February 23, Neil appeared in class wearing glasses. Mrs. Meijer told me that he needed to wear them for reading and other close work. He fingered them, twirled them, and took them on and off. Neil rarely wore his glasses as the school year progressed. Mrs. Meijer had also met with Neil's psychologist and they had set up a behavior modification plan for Neil with four rules. The rules were taped to his desk. They read: (1) Stay in seat. (2) Not bother others. (3) Sit quietly--hands and mouth. (4) Do your own work. Neil could receive up to 16 check marks per day for complying with all four rules during the four times per day that the teacher was supposed to check him. Mrs. Meijer kept a tally of infractions by making marks on her hand when she caught Neil breaking a rule. Neil was supposed to keep track himself and report to her at the end of each day. At 2:30 on the 23rd, Mrs. Meijer had three tallies for Neil, and she told me that yesterday she had had seven.

About a week later I asked Mrs. Meijer how Neil's plan was coming along. She said that she had not been able to follow through on it last Friday because of the special activities at school. Mrs. Meijer said that if she had time she would sit down and have Neil rate himself on a five-point scale. She said that she reminded him during the day by saying, "'four rules,' but it doesn't stick. There's no guilt...even though I've told him 'that's not acceptable school behavior'" (FN's 3-11-82, p. 5). She talked about not understanding how Neil could be so "mousie" (acting quiet and timid) at times and so "totally out of whack" in other instances, like wrestling in the library (FN's 3-2-82, p. 4).

Neil was in trouble for talking while the teacher was talking and for sharing answers with other boys. In the hallways he had been pulling hair, grabbing hats, and tripping other children. Mrs. Meijer said that he had trouble processing information. By March, processing had become part of Mrs. Meijer's definition of focus. She said, "He can't narrow it down enough and focus enough on what he wants to say and spit it out in less than 50 words." She described Neil as "just tumbling over himself" (FN's 3-1-82, p. 4). This was in reference to an incident when Neil was at the computer. Something had not worked right and he had to go ask Mrs. Meijer about it. He was unable to express to her verbally what was wrong.

The spring parent-teacher conferences were held March 17-19. Neil's parents were late for their conference because they had spent extra time in an earlier session with his brother's teacher. They stayed longer than their allotted time with Mrs. Meijer, too. They brought a letter to her from the psychologist. He wanted to meet with her to go over the behavior modification plan. The psychologist wrote that she was not to lecture Neil, but simply to instruct him. He also suggested that daily removal from the group for disruption would be better for Neil than long-term removal of his desk to another area of the room. Mrs. Meijer was upset about the letter. She felt that the psychologist was trying to tell her how to run her class.

When I asked her why she had not referred Neil for special services in light of all his problems, she said, "I have pegged Neil as a student of low-average ability, and when he performs, he performs at that ability range." She said that she felt he could "probably do more if he could focus on the task and keep his mind on himself instead of others, but as far as seeing a learning disability, or places where our specialists could help, I really haven't seen that Neil needs that kind of thing. In fact, I think the psychologist will probably do more in terms of the boy's behavior, because of getting to the parents, than anything else" (FN's 3-23-82, p. 6). Clearly, Mrs. Meijer felt that Neil's parents were the major cause of Neil's problems. She saw little that she or the school district could do for him at this point.

On April 1, Neil told Mrs. Meijer that Craig had bent his fingers back on the playground. When Mrs. Meijer asked Craig about the incident, he said he did bend Neil's fingers back, but he did it because Neil punched him in the stomach first. Mrs. Meijer reprimanded Neil for hitting Craig. Later in the day, Neil's desk was isolated from the other children for not paying attention. For the most part, Neil appeared to be accepted by the other boys. While not one of the most popular children, he was not shunned by his classmates as were Craig and, at times, Pam.

Mrs. Meijer continued to send home nightly reports to Neil's parents throughout the spring. This meant that she had to check on his behavior 16 times a day. She told me that Neil's psychologist felt that he no longer needed to come to therapy. Mrs. Meijer said that, in class, Neil was "right back to his old behavior. Even though I'm sending these home, I don't think the family's giving him the rewards that they were" (FN's 5-26-82, p. 9). She said that at first Neil "lived in mortal fear" of the daily checklist. She said that she had sent home a bad report the previous day for "library shenanigans." He was too loud, would not settle down when asked, and did not do much seatwork. Mrs. Meijer ended her discussion of Neil that day by repeating her feelings that Neil's parents had an incorrect perception of him.

Mrs. Meijer felt that he had low-average ability and that when he did work, he worked at that level. In other words, there was no discrepancy between his ability and his achievement--one of the criteria for suspecting a learning disability. On the other hand, although his disruptive behavior continued to bother her all year long, Mrs. Meijer apparently felt that there were no services that the school district could provide to help Neil with his behavior. Neil was not referred for special education services during the 1981-82 school year. If Neil continued to show such a profile of inappropriateness all year long, why was he never referred for special education? If the source of Pam's problems was some type of inner distraction and Craig's was some type of outer distraction, the source of Neil's problems seemed to be from outside the school environment altogether. Mrs. Meijer spent more time with Neil's parents in the school year than with any of the other parents. The lack of a special education referral decision for Neil seemed to have a great deal to do with how Mrs. Meijer saw the child in relationship to his family.

I would like to present several stories about Neil's classroom behavior because I want to explore further his classroom responses to see why Mrs. Meijer had originally grouped Neil with Craig and Pam as "having it, but not being able to put it together." "Getting the Math Test Done" will show Neil's early problems with attention and impulsivity. He got up three times to go to the bathroom and once to go to the hall within a 30-minute time period during a math test.

Getting the Math Test Done

> In the first days of the school year Mrs. Meijer gave the children a number of informal achievement tests to help determine her group placements. On September 10, after storytime in the afternoon, she asked the children to get ready to do another page of the math test they had started the previous day. Neil was chosen to pass out the papers. Mrs. Meijer told the children that this page would be a little harder than their previous work. They began to work on it at about 1:30. She walked around, looking over shoulders, as the children worked. A few minutes later she told Donald, who was helping Neil, that Neil needed to do his own work. She reminded the children that this was a test to see what they already knew. It would help her to know what to teach them. As she walked past Donald and Neil, Neil took a poke at her with his pencil. Mrs. Meijer, in all likelihood, did not feel it because it had been more of a pretend swipe. Donald, who proved to be the best student in the class in math, finished the test in about ten minutes. At 2:07, everyone else was done except Pam, Steve, and Neil. In the approximately 30 minutes between the time Neil was told to do his own work and the fieldnote observation that he was still

> working at 2:07, he had taken two bathroom breaks and had been out of his seat at least two other times that I observed. After the first bathroom break, Neil forgot to turn out the light (room procedure) and was reminded to do so by three or four other children. Mrs. Meijer then noticed that he did not have much of the test done and told him where she wanted him to be on the page when she returned. He worked a little and then watched John draw for a while before he took another bathroom break and then went out into the hall. Mrs. Meijer followed him and could be heard telling him to always let her know when he was leaving the room. He came back in with a pencil box and went on with his math work. Meanwhile the majority of the other children had moved on to the next assignment and were getting ready to go outside for recess. (FN's 9-10-81, p. 6)

After the children had left for the day, Mrs. Meijer told me that Neil was a "lazy, nonfocusing child." She said that from what she could see of his math test as she walked around, his answers looked good. She said that he had done better today than yesterday and that he had completed more work. She felt that moving his seat to the aisle helped. When asked if math was particularly hard for Neil, Mrs. Meijer responded, "When he does attend, he can perform, but it's just that he is a nonfocusing child" (FN's 9-10-81, p. 8). In other words, when he attended to his work he could do it. He had the ability.

Earlier in this section Neil's strategy for doing the Candy Page worksheet was discussed. Another example of his use of a learning strategy for math was observed on October 29. These strategy stories are being included to give the reader an idea of Neil's cognitive abilities. His strategies may not be unique for a seven year old, but because Neil did so much subvocalizing (talking quietly to himself) it was easy for me to record how his thoughts seemed to connect to his actions. On October 27, Neil was at the computer doing the day's math program. Several times he left the computer and ran over to his desk where he seemed to be doing something to his Snoopy name tag that was taped to the top of his desk. Then he would run back to the computer and type in his answer. I was too far away to be able to tell exactly what was going on. On October 29, however, I was standing at the cubbies, right by Neil's desk, and could watch him working without being conspicuous.

Using a Math Strategy

> Neil had a ditto page of 24 subtraction problems sitting in front of him. He was not getting started right away. It was 11:29 and he had done only one problem. I could hear him talking to himself (under his breath) about his math problems being the next thing to do. He sat and rocked in his seat a bit, then stared in space, still not working. Two minutes later, after Mrs. Meijer spoke to some other children about getting to work, he began. He went to his Snoopy name tag again, and this time I could see that he had devised a way of using it to count. He did not have a number line taped to his desk like some of the other children. (Mrs. Meijer did not have enough of them for the whole class and was waiting for more to come.) As I watched, he appeared to be tapping his pencil on the letters of his name and on the picture of the dog. He tapped certain parts of the letters and the dog to count. (Closer observation of the name tag later found many pencil-point marks on it.) I could see that he was getting the problems correct. He quit for a while, watched some interaction between Royce and John, and then went back to the last row of problems. It was now 11:37 and the problem was 12 - 3. He said, "Twelve minus three" aloud and counted on Snoopy and on his fingers saying, "1, 2, 3." Then he said, "9," wrote his answer down, and took his paper over to the wire basket for completed math papers. He left his paper and came back to his desk but counted out another problem. Then he went back to the basket, got his paper out, and changed one of his answers. (FN's 10-29-81, p. 3)

Neil seemed to have most of the answers correct as I watched him, so I decided to look at the problem he had changed. I saw an erasure on 14 - 6. He had erased an 8 and written in a 7. I looked at the paper under his, but it was correct, 14 - 6 = 8. I went over and asked Neil why he had changed his answer. He said, "I thought it was a wrong answer" (FN's 10-29-81, p. 3). Although I was unable to detect any further reason why Neil thought his answer was wrong, I had discovered what he was doing with his Snoopy name tag. He had devised his own unique math aid. While this is not a remarkable ability in a child by any means, it does give a clue to Neil's mental abilities and his resourcefulness.

This type of anxious behavior was noted at other points during the school year. One afternoon when the class was with the other second-grade teacher for social studies, they were assigned partners of the opposite sex and had to pantomime an action that she had written on a slip of paper. Neil did not have a partner, so the teacher asked him to be hers. When they got up in front to perform their action, Neil forgot what to do and Mrs. Field had to whisper it to him. Later she told me that "his hands were shaking with nerves" (FN's 10-1-81, p. 6). He seemed particularly reluctant to perform in front of the class. This included the simple volunteering of an answer when Mrs. Meijer asked a question. Unlike Craig, whose hand was generally up whether he knew the answer or not, and Pam, who would volunteer when she knew the answer, Neil was quite reticent about this aspect of being a student.

Neil's switching between behaviors may have been one factor that caused Mrs. Meijer to be puzzled about him. One day she remarked that sometimes he was "such a mouse" (FN's 3-2-82, p. 4). It did not seem to go with his aggressive behavior at other times, like wrestling in the library, hitting and spitting on the playground, and teasing other children behind the teacher's back. One morning Mrs. Meijer showed the class Neil's paper as an example of a good handwriting assignment. He shyly smiled and looked proud (FN's 1-13-81, p. 1). Another day I observed him making a paper airplane out of a note Mrs. Meijer had given him for having a good paper (FN's 2-2-82, p. 2).

Although Neil did not seem to have one particular best friend in the class, he was usually in the mainstream of activities. On the playground he always took an active part in whatever sport the boys were playing. One day when the reading teacher came in to do a lesson, Neil was chosen to act out a fairy tale. He was allowed to choose any two boys to help him. Donald was his first choice and Jimmy his second. Donald was one of the smartest children in the class. He was mischievous, but only behind the teacher's back. Jimmy was fun-loving and quite often in trouble with Mrs. Meijer but was in the top groups for reading and math.

Neil: A Summary

The stories and comments about Neil were included to give the reader a sense of Neil and a chance to think about why he was not referred for special education by Mrs. Meijer. Initially Neil was grouped with the other two referral children as "having it, but can't put it together." After many months of observing Neil and trying to make sense out of his actions, Mrs. Meijer decided that he was of low-average ability and was achieving to his ability when he wanted to. Therefore, she did not refer him.

The comments show Neil to be a boy who had trouble staying in his seat and concentrating on his work. He bothered other children. He could not stay focused on the tasks at hand, even when his desk was isolated from those of his peers. He seemed afraid to speak out in class and was hesitant to approach the teacher for help, but could be very aggressive on the playground or in the hallways. I had seen him be mean to other children. Mrs. Meijer had seen him hit and spit at other children.

In the fieldnote stories I have tried to describe incidents that would support the above comments. Neil had strategies for learning that he would use instead of always asking Mrs. Meijer for help as Craig did. The stories make it clear that Neil wanted to complete his school tasks successfully, as evidenced by the way he would check his answers against other students' work. They also show Neil in times of inattention and nonfocus.

Neil was more or less salient to Mrs. Meijer as the school year went on. He was not always the focus of her comments. There came a point when she no longer felt there was a gap between what he was capable of achieving and what he actually achieved. It is doubtful that this happened at any one point in time that could be pinpointed. The first opportunity that Mrs. Meijer may have had to put all her observations together might have been the day I asked her why she had not referred Neil for special education (FN's 3-23-82).

Case Studies: Overall Summary

The significance of the teacher's practical reasoning and observation can be seen in the three case studies presented. Throughout the difficult process of diagnosing a child who is not succeeding in school and trying to decide if special education services are an appropriate alternative, the regular education classroom teacher is in the pivotal position. The teacher is receiving a great deal of input from the child, from the other children's reactions to the child, from her or his own reactions to the child, and most important from the way this input is interactionally put together in the context of her or his classroom. The teacher takes all the new input and must make sense of it in the context of her or his own expectations, her or his personal traits, and the constraints and opportunities placed on her or him by the school district, among other factors. This is not an easy task. Teachers are rarely given credit by the public, or even by their own administrators, for the complexity of the decisions they must make about children.

When she decided not to refer Neil, Mrs. Meijer added another piece to the puzzle of how a teacher goes about deciding whom to refer for special education. She had grouped Neil with Craig and Pam in the set of children who she felt had the ability to succeed in school, but somehow could not yet put everything together to be a success. Craig had been referred and labeled learning disabled. Pam had been referred and given school counseling services. Neil was a disturbing child to Mrs. Meijer. This was evident in the fieldnotes and interviews. She talked about his disruptive behavior and indicated that she felt it had an emotional basis, but said that she did not see any of the services they had at Pawnee School being right for Neil. She felt that his outside therapy was the best thing for Neil and his family.

In Interview 8 (3-11-82) I asked Mrs. Meijer what she was seeing or noticing at that point in the year. Her response struck me as curious at first because instead of citing anything having to do with the curriculum or with particular children, she responded by talking about the contacts that she had had with Craig's, Pam's and Neil's parents that year. She said that "many of the problems of the children are there because of the parental problems" (FN's 3-11-82, p. 5).

To varying extents, Mrs. Meijer appeared to attribute the cause of the problems of all three of her "has it, but can't put it together" children to their parents. I sensed that with Craig she felt he was just like his parents, and she questioned the extent to which education was valued in the home. Craig's mother had helped at school with the Halloween party and the puppet-making project. His parents were concerned about his lack of progress but seemed as bewildered as Craig as to what to do about it. As will be seen later, Craig was making progress. He just had a lot further to go than some of the other children.

Mrs. Meijer attributed much of Pam's problem to her parents' lack of ability to parent. She described them as bright, highly educated people with an eight-year-old daughter who was being treated more like a miniature adult. While Mrs. Meijer held Pam's parents responsible in part for her problems, she did not view the relationship as destructive to Pam. It simply did not help her self-confidence. Pam's inner distraction played a part in the feeling of joint responsibility between child and parent for her problems.

Mrs. Meijer said that she felt Neil's problems were a result of parental pressures on him. Mrs. Meijer sensed an inharmonious relationship between the parents over child rearing, and she felt that this greatly hampered Neil's chances of success in school. She may not have referred Neil for special education because she felt that his parents were responsible for his behavior. It should also be recalled that Neil was referred, but not placed, for special education in first grade.

When she said that Neil did not fit into existing special education services, Mrs. Meijer added evidence to the argument that a teacher takes a phenomenological approach to making classroom decisions such as determining which children are in need of special education help. She looked at the child's needs in relationship to the total school picture. She expected her class to "jell," both educationally and behaviorally, at certain times during the school year. Mrs. Meijer had an idea of what was available in the school in terms of special help for children. She did not see the district specialists as being able to help Neil. She seemed to have made this decision on her own as she never referred Neil to the multidisciplinary team. It should also be pointed out that Neil was receiving assistance privately. Mrs. Meijer said that she felt the outside therapy could do more for Neil than a referral to special education.

This concludes the general discussion of the data about the "has it, but can't put it together kids." Next will follow a description of what happened to the two children who were referred for special education and the process each went through in the course of getting a special education identity.

The Special Education Referral Process: Craig's and Pam's Paths

The discussion in this section deals directly with Craig and Pam. In the previous section, examples of their general classroom behavior were given. The specifics of their referrals for special education services by Mrs. Meijer will now be presented. Children like Craig and Pam seem to keep time to a "different drummer" as they progress through school. Both children's idiosyncrasies stood out from the first days of the school year as recorded in fieldnotes, audiotaped interviews, and videotaped recordings of the classroom. What follows is an examination of each child's education career path as they went through the special education referral process in the 1981-82 school year. The official steps leading to referral will be traced separately (see Figures 16 and 17) in the coming pages.

Craig's Path

Craig was one of the first children "targeted" by Mrs. Meijer in our conversations held on 9-21 and 9-22. In Figure 16 a summarization of the events leading up to Craig's placement into special education is given. The major decision points are discussed next, with pertinent examples from the fieldnotes when appropriate. The first building team meeting for Craig was held on October 5, 1981, not quite a month into the school year. Present at this meeting were the principal, Mrs. Meijer, the remedial reading teacher, the resource room teacher, and the district school psychologist. Mrs. Meijer had submitted a four-page referral form that was standard in the elementary schools in the Seneca district (see Appendix D). As a result of this meeting, Craig was observed in the classroom by the resource room teacher on October 21. Craig did not seem to be bothered by his school progress at all. A few frustrating events had happened, but I never really saw an indication of his unhappiness until October 27. That day everything seemed to fall apart for Craig, and real frustration crept into his voice. At the beginning of the morning he had been warned to turn around in his desk. He was told that he would be sitting on the floor again (see FN's

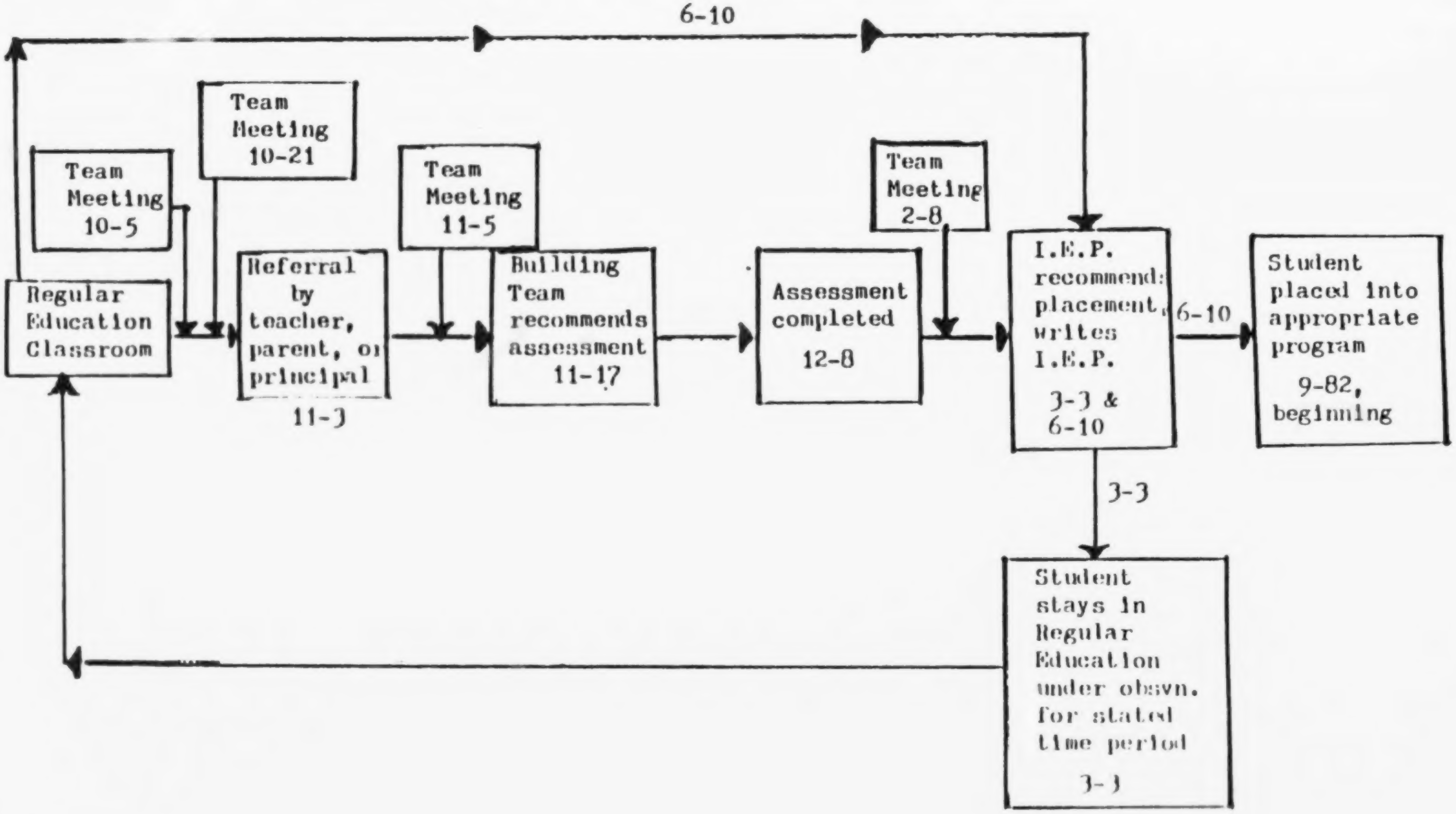

6-10
Team Meeting 10-5
Team Meeting 10-21
Team Meeting 11-5
Team Meeting 2-8
Regular Education Classroom
Referral by teacher, parent, or principal
11-3
Building Team recommends assessment 11-17
Assessment completed 12-8
I.E.P. recommends placement, writes I.E.P.
3-3 & 6-10
6-10
Student placed into appropriate program
9-82, beginning
3-3
Student stays in Regular Education under obsvn. for stated time period
3-3

Figure 16: Special education referral process events for Craig.

10-8-81) today if he did not. Mrs. Meijer then had the class do Upa-You-Body for math. Craig was the only one left standing after she called the names on the papers she had received the day before. She and the class waited while Craig searched around his desk for the paper. She asked him if he had done it, and in a high-pitched voice he responded, "I don't know" (FN's 10-27-81, p. 1). Mrs. Meijer went over to help him look for it. She later said that she found over 20 unfinished papers in his work folder.

A little while later the class started to do spelling. The children were told to open their books and look for something. While the rest of the children took their books out, Craig merely sat and stared. When Mrs. Meijer asked the children to look at something specific, he said, "I can't see it" in that same high-pitched voice. While it was not unusual for Craig to be on the wrong page or to be starting to work after the other children, it was unusual for him to be using such a high-pitched voice to respond to Mrs. Meijer. It was as if the realization that he was floundering in the school work had finally caught up with him. It was now the end of October.

Craig's problems seemed to be carrying over into his physical education class too. That same day when Mrs. Meijer asked the gym teacher how her class's behavior had been, she was told that they were doing much better except for "one little guy" (FN's 10-27-81, p. 3), Craig. For the next three months Mrs. Meijer spent a great deal of her time trying to help Craig by getting special services for him. On November 5, she met with his parents to discuss his difficulties. She reported that his father was pretty quiet. Craig's mother had given her consent for psychological testing to be done. She said that she had always known there was some type of problem with Craig.

The second building team meeting took place in mid-November. The results of the resource room teacher's observation were discussed, and Mrs. Meijer was told that the tests might not show any learning disability until fourth grade. The team decided to go ahead with psychological assessment, and the required form was sent home for Craig's parents to sign. The school psychologist saw Craig on December 8, two months after the first team meeting was held. The psychologist's report was ready after the holiday break, but the meeting was delayed twice because there were snow days on two successive Mondays. The team could not meet any other day because the district specialists had to be in other buildings on the other days. The third team meeting finally took place on February 8 and was attended by the same people as before, with the addition of the school counselor. At this meeting, Mrs. Meijer was told that Craig did not qualify for special education services in the Seneca School District.

The IEP meeting was held on March 3, 1982, five months after Mrs. Meijer had first referred Craig. Attending this meeting were Craig's father, the school psychologist, the principal, Mrs. Meijer, the resource room teacher, and the school counselor. The recommendation of the team was that no placement be made at that time. Mrs. Meijer was asked to reevaluate Craig in June to see if fall 1982 placement in the resource room might be warranted. Just two weeks later, before the spring parent-teacher conference, Mrs. Meijer told me that she was ready to recommend to his parents that Craig be allowed by them to go into the resource room then, rather than waiting until June. She did not make the recommendation because the reading teacher asked the parents to take Craig to get an electroencephalogram (tracing of his brain waves) to exclude the possibility of neurological involvement. The reading teacher had worked with a child similar to Craig before, and that child had had neurological problems. Craig's parents asked for services to begin at a meeting they had with Mrs. Meijer in May. On June 10, Craig was formally placed into the special education system as a learning disabled student. He finally had his special education identity.

It took the entire school year to resolve what Mrs. Meijer first deemed to be a serious problem that would stand in the way of Craig's educational success in second grade. I will return to a discussion of what was happening to Craig in the classroom around some of the crucial times in the referral process following the section on Pam's referral steps.

Pam's Path

Early in the year Mrs. Meijer was sufficiently concerned about Pam's difficulties to telephone her mother rather than wait for Open House or conferences to come up. What bothered the teacher most was Pam's inability to complete assignments due to not being able to focus on the task. She was questioning the cause of Pam's distractibility. Mrs. Meijer wondered if it was an auditory, or a visual, or even an internal distractibility (Interview 3, 9-22-81). Mrs. Meijer talked to the building team about Pam in early October. The school counselor told her that Pam wouldn't qualify for special education because her reading scores were too high. She suggested that Mrs. Meijer use an "office" (a desk separated from the rest of the children's desks to limit distractions) with Pam. This suggestion was never followed during the researcher's presence in the classroom.

On November 12, Mrs. Meijer said that Pam was next for referral now that she had Craig "in the works." She said that she wanted to "go on record" (FN's 11-12-81, p. 5) as having tried regardless of what the counselor had said about Pam's eligibility chances. Around this time she also noticed that Pam was bending her face particularly close to her paper and wondered if she might need her eyes checked or a complete physical exam. There was no Pawnee School Referral Form completed by Mrs. Meijer on Pam, as her mother had been the one who finally asked the principal to have her evaluated. In this case, the team skipped directly to the assessment phase of the referral process (see Figure 17). After the Christmas holiday, Pam was tested by the resource room teacher. When the teacher walked Pam back down to the room from the testing, she told Mrs. Meijer that she had not checked all the test answers yet, but she felt that Pam was "very bright" (FN's 1-5-82, p. 3).

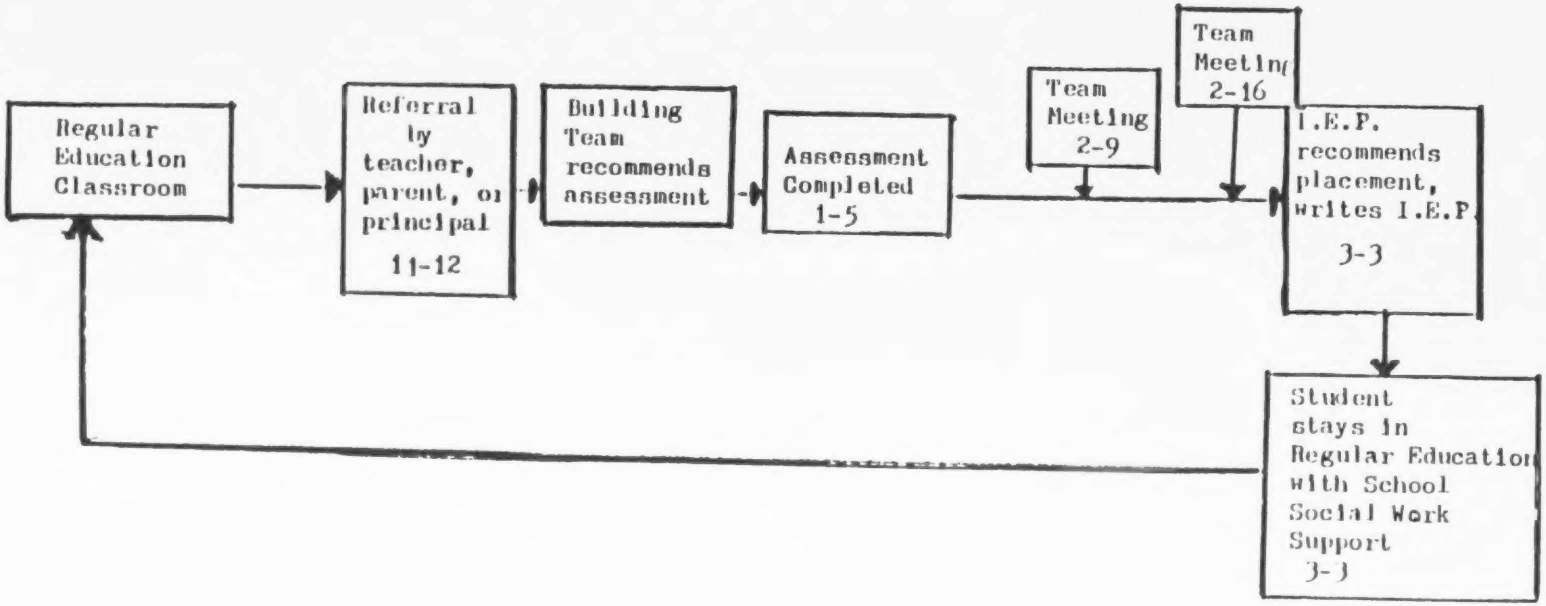

Regular Education Classroom
Referral by teacher, parent, o
principal
11-12
Building Team recommends assessment
Assessment Completed
1-5
Team Meeting
2-9
Team Meetin
2-16
I.E.P. recommends placement, writes I.E.P.
3-3
Student stays in Regular Educatio with School Social Work Support
3-3

Figure 17: Special Education referral process events for Pammy.

Report cards went home on Friday, February 5. Mrs. Meijer told me that Pam's mother had called her at home on Saturday. Pam had burst into tears when her parents found the report card in her school bag on Saturday. According to her mother, Pam had sobbed that the other kids did not like her. Pam told her parents that they had all hated her since she was in preschool. Apparently this report card was the breaking point for Pam after holding these feelings inside for three years. Unfortunately, I did not get a copy of the report card to see what had upset Pammy.

On Feburary 9, the second team meeting was held to discuss Pam's test results. At this meeting Mrs. Meijer was told that Pam's parents had taken her to a pediatrician. When he noted the dark circles under her eyes, the thinness of her body, and the increase in asthma attacks, he felt that there might be a physical problem. It was reported that the parents were taking the child to an allergy specialist.

Another team meeting was held on February 16, and Mrs. Meijer was told that since Pam did not have any academic problems, she did not qualify for special education. It was decided that the school counselor would meet with her to work on her socialization skills. A few days later Pam was noticed eating a lunch of rice cakes, carob chunks, and fruit juice. She told me that she could not have any eggs, milk, or wheat foods for 30 days.

On February 23, Mrs. Meijer told me that the counselor had asked Pam to choose four girls to be in her socialization group. The group finally got settled on March 2 and included Sarah, Mary, and Carrie in addition to Pam. On February 25 Mrs. Meijer said that Pam's mother had called to ask her if there had been any noticeable changes since the diet began. Mrs. Meijer said that Pam had been more responsive in class and the black circles under her eyes seemed to be gone. She was still having a great deal of trouble with cursive writing. Pam's IEP meeting was held on March 1. On March 2 (Interview 7), Mrs. Meijer discussed the results. Pam's mother had explained that the allergy tests would be going on all month. Pam's guinea pig had to be taken away. Pam had been having trouble with Judy, a classmate who lived in her neighborhood. Judy had received a new dog and Pam could not go over to her home to see it because of the allergy tests. Pam's mother told Mrs. Meijer that Pam had always had a hard time making friends. Her current best friend was the kindergarten-age son of family friends. Pam talked about marrying him, according to the mother.

The IEP report stated that Pam's reading, math, and spelling were all at grade level or above. The school psychologist said that Pam's problems were "social emotional discomfort" (FN's 3-2-82, p. 3). She recommended that the counselor work with Pam on making friends. She said that Pam had a real feeling of isolation. The psychologist felt that these problems were probably the cause of Pam's poor school performance. She was unhappy with herself for not being able to do the things she saw other second graders do. Mrs. Meijer said that they told the mother that Pam seemed to be "socially naive" in terms of her age group. Pam's mother told the team that she had hoped the "allergy thing" was the reason for the problems, but not anymore. The dark circles under her eyes had come back, and the same reactions reappeared even though she was still on the diet.

On March 23, Mrs. Meijer said that Pam's father had come in alone for the parent-teacher conference. She told me that they discussed the diet and Pam's failure to increase her academic output. He said that they would try to help her with cursive writing at home. They also talked about how hard it is to be the parent of a child you know is smart yet isn't succeeding in school.

The rest of the spring passed by without any noticeable improvement in Pam's work habits. Mrs. Meijer's comments about Pam in Interview 10 on May 26 can be summed up by the statement that there has been "no significant change." She went on: "The only thing I can say about Pam is that she may be a little more outgoing and a little bit more responsive to me, but as far as producing any more work..." (FN's 5-26-82, p. 8). She then said that Pam's reading scores for the end of the year were fine. Her word recognition was 4.7 and her comprehension score was 3.6 (in grade equivalents). "You know the ability is there. It's just the application of skills that doesn't come through or show up on paper" (FN's 5-26-82, p. 8). When asked about the counseling group, Mrs. Meijer said that Pam was going alone now. According to Mrs. Meijer, she "did not have the desire [to put in the work] to change.... Even though it bothered her, it must not have bothered her enough to do the things that she was asked to do"

(FN's 5-26-82, pp. 8 & 9). She was friendly with Judy again, and one friend seemed to be enough for Pam.

At year's end, despite Mrs. Meijer's efforts, Pam was still floundering, "left to her own devices." Unlike Craig, for whom some hope of help during the following year had been held out, there was no more discussion about what could be done for Pam.

My Reactions to the Referral Process

When I read back over the fieldnotes for the entire year, I noted that in mid-February Craig was no longer figuring in the notes as much as he had previously. In fact, the notes were practically devoid of specific "Craig incidents" for two or three weeks. In looking over his referral path (see Figure 16), note that it was on February 8, at the third building team meeting, that Mrs. Meijer had learned that Craig would not qualify for special education services. She was disappointed, as she felt that Craig was a little boy who could greatly benefit from one-to-one help. She said, "He's so eager to do well" (FN's 2-9-82, p. 5) and he could really have "benefited from the extra help." Mrs. Meijer had been sure all along that Craig would qualify for special education. She may have felt his ineligibility was a negation of her ability to identify a child for special education. Perhaps the disappearance of Craig references in the fieldnotes was also a reaction to my own shared disappointment with Mrs. Meijer because I had followed his progress so closely.

Possibly, it was because Mrs. Meijer became more focused on other children from then on.

With Pam there was also disappointment, but Mrs. Meijer had never held out much hope for her placement from the beginning (refer to the "just want to go on record" comment). Also, Pam did end up receiving counseling services from the school's guidance counselor. On the other hand, Mrs. Meijer was more disappointed about Craig because he received an "on hold" for three months until his reevaluation in June. By June, with enough discrepancy between Craig's achievement and his ability finally documented, he was placed into an LD resource room program for the next school year.

Both Craig's and Pam's special education referral paths are retraced in Figure 18. The regular education classroom was the starting point in the referral process. The first decision point (or gate) was when Mrs. Meijer decided whether or not to refer the children to the special services department. If a referral was made, the building team met to discuss the child and to decide if testing and/or observation were needed. If testing was done the next decision point came at the IEP meeting. At this meeting, with the parents present, it was determined if the child qualified for special education or not. Another option, "not placed but keep under observation," was used for Craig. This meant that the teacher was to keep a close watch on the child's progress and alert the team if further action was needed. In this option, another IEP meeting was held after a stated period of time. At

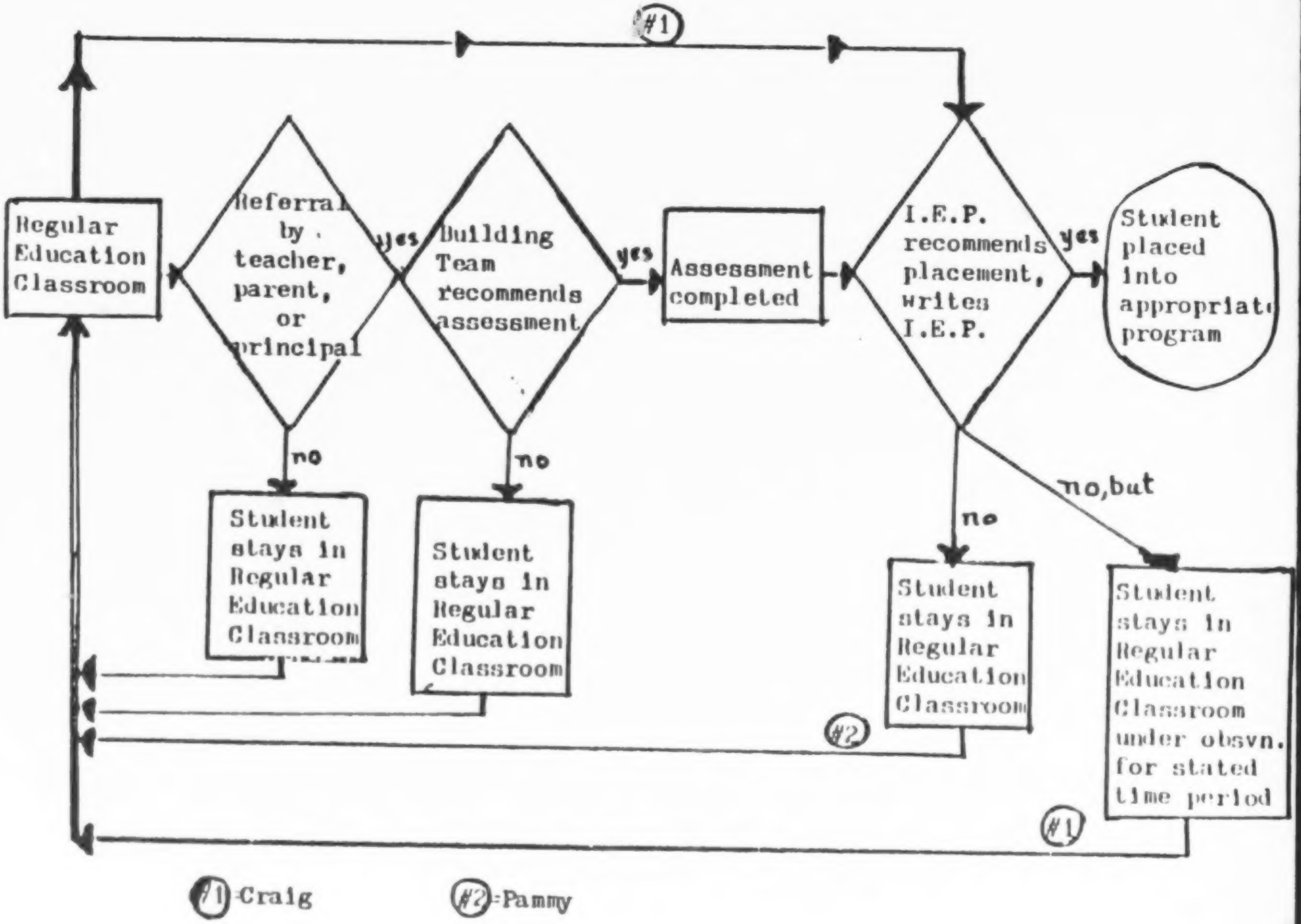

#1
Regular Education Classroom
Referral by teacher, parent, or principal
yes
Building Team recommends assessment
yes
Assessment completed
I.E.P. recommends placement, writes I.E.P.
yes
Student placed into appropriat program
no
Student stays in Regular Education Classroom
no
Student stays in Regular Education Classroom
no
Student stays in Regular Education Classroom
no,but
Student stays in Regular Education Classroom under obsvn. for stated time period
#2
#1
#1=Craig
#2=Pammy

Figure 18: Mrs. Meijer's special education referrals in the 1981-82 school year.

the second IEP meeting for Craig it was decided that he should be placed into special education for the following school year.

Summary

The overriding research question of the study was: How does one teacher come to identify children as being in need of special education services in the early elementary grades? The conclusions of the study were derived from an intensive year-long participant observational study of one experienced teacher in a suburban second-grade classroom.

My intention in this section has been to show the importance of the teacher's observation and practical reasoning in the special education referral decisions that she made. The children did not get special education identities based on static behaviors on a classification referral instrument. She did not refer every child in her class who had problems, nor did she even refer all the children whom she targeted for referral early in the year. She used multiple factors that varied in their individual importance with the child being considered. As such she was using polythetic rather than monothetic classification schemata (Levine, 1984). This type of classification helps account for her use of the family resemblance (Wittgenstein, 1953) approach when she made her referral decisions. The children referred for special education resembled each other in many aspects of their classroom responses, but they did not have identical difficulties, as was shown in the case studies presented.

Simply having a general understanding of the typical behavioral characteristics that indicate one or another handicapping condition did not provide enough specific, contextually embedded information for the teacher to make the practical decision to refer a particular child for special education services or not. The teacher's observations of the interaction of the child with the classroom and school system, as well as the teacher's own past experience, were crucial in the actual referral decisions that were made. A teacher's personality, her or his past experience, and her or his teaching philosophy interact with student characteristics and behavior. These mediate what students do with the teacher in classroom interactions (Mehan, Hertweck, & Meihls, 1983). There was an "ensemble of items" that mutually supported and determined one another (Gurwitsch, 1966, p. 24). This ensemble of items was unique to each child being considered.

Conclusions and Implications for Educational Research and Practice

It has been said that teachers and their students accomplish desired (and undesired) ends based upon the way they mutually construct "patterns of action and meaning in a classroom microculture" (Erickson, 1985, p. 91). The patterns differ from year to year both within and across classrooms. This study was carried out with an intention to understand how one teacher made decisions in a classroom. The intention changed to understand how one teacher and her students engaged in the construction of patterns of action and meaning resulting in the teacher's referral of children for special education services. I believe that what Mrs. Meijer was talking about when she referred to her class as not "jelling" was the overall pattern of action and meaning that she was expecting to see form from within her class. The class would be "jelled" when the patterns of action and meaning came together. It was in the construction of the patterns that the teacher identified students with problems. The subsequent referral of two children in the class to special education was but one of the elements of incongruity that was preventing a clear pattern of action and meaning from being formed in the late fall of 1981, but it is the central element of this study.

The topic of this study was the identification of children with mild to moderate learning or behavior problems in a second-grade classroom. The identification process for these children began when the classroom teacher noticed children's behaviors that set them apart, either educationally or behaviorally (or both), from the other children in the class. The observations of the teacher in this study over the course of one school year, leading to her making two special education referrals, form the major findings of the study.

The primary question addressed in this participant observational study had to do with the beginning of the special education referral process. The overall research question I started the study with was: How does a second-grade teacher come to identify children as being in need of special education help? This question remained constant throughout the year, although the more focused questions that I posed at the outset of the research did change as the fieldwork and the school year progressed.

Three major factors influenced the teacher when she set children apart for special education referral. These factors were intertwined, but for the sake of a clearer presentation, the findings will be discussed as if there were three separate groups. The overlap of the factors should be apparent. The three aspects are not mutually exclusive. As with the nature of the research and the nature of the questions, all are mutually constituted. These three factors were: (a) the child's interactional performance in the classroom, (b) the teacher's observations and her practical reasoning about them, and (c) the institutional procedures and practices involved in referring a child to special education. Teachers and their students mutually constitute environments as they interact on a face-to-face basis in the classroom. The teacher will be prepared for the arrival of his or her new class. He or she will have the needed materials and an organized curriculum that he or she wishes (or is expected) to teach at the start of a given year. In the school studied, there was a high rate of stability; therefore, the teacher knew quite a bit about the children before they walked in the door on the first day. Yet, the environment is not entirely preset. Even though a teacher has all this information, it is not until the children arrive that the patterns start to take shape.

In Figure 19 I have shown how the special education referral children were set apart. The patterns of action and meaning are

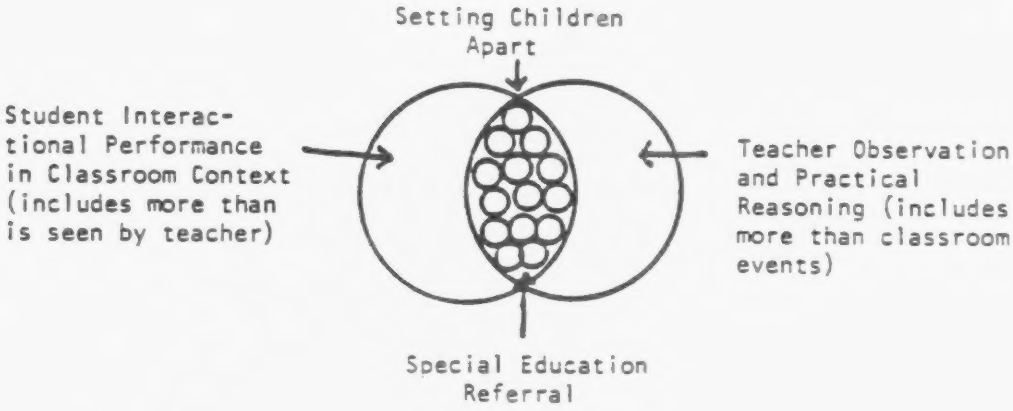

Setting Children Apart
Student Interactional Performance in Classroom Context (includes more than is seen by teacher)
Teacher Observation and Practical Reasoning (includes more than classroom events)
Special Education Referral

Figure 19: Mutually constituted patterns of action and meaning.

constructed at the point where the teacher's observation and practical reasoning interact with the interactional performance of the children. This construction takes place in the context of the classroom. It is also from within this area that children are set apart into various groupings, such as the instructional groups for reading and math, remedial groups for reading and math, target children, withit children, the gang of boys, and special education referral children, to use some of Mrs. Meijer's names. The two circles do not completely overlap because the interactional performances of the children were not all observed by the teacher. (See Spencer-Hall, 1981, for further discussion of what goes on behind the teacher's back.) Also, the teacher's observation and practical reasoning took in more than just the events in her classroom. Any reasoning she did about her children was balanced with what she knew about them, outside her interactional day-to-day perspective. This included reports from former teachers, the gym teacher, and the other second-grade teacher, who taught Mrs. Meijer's class social studies. It included her knowledge of the parents based on conferences and phone calls, and information outside school from seeing the children in local stores or hearing about them from their neighbors.

Interactional Performance in Classroom Contexts

Although not a new finding, the importance of the interactions that occur on the first day and in the first few weeks of the school year were an obvious factor in Mrs. Meijer's special education referral decisions. Even before the first day of school she had expectations for the children and had made some tentative groupings, but it was in those first real face-to-face interactions that she actually began to set children apart. She watched the children's performances in academic activities and in procedural activities, such as following directions, lining up, and filing completed papers. She was concerned with how the children's academic performance was intertwined with their social performance.

I did not see how crucial the students' interactional performance was in the early weeks of the school year until the year was well underway. Once Mrs. Meijer referred some children for special education and I started going back through the fieldnotes, I found evidence of how they set themselves apart from the beginning. Mrs. Meijer told me that she watched for the following behaviors on the first day of school:

1. Did the child finish the assigned work?
2. Could the child stay on task?
3. Did the child show signs of fatigue?
4. Was the child copying from another child?
5. What types of questions did the child ask?
(FN's 9-9-81, p. 6)

I have no doubt that she used her answers to these questions to begin forming pictures of each child's interactional performance though we did not discuss this list as such at the time. Even before the first day of school, Mrs. Meijer already knew of children to whom she wanted to pay close initial attention. Specific children were chosen as helpers on the first day because of what she already knew about them. She looked at the children who had been leaders in first grade as well as those who were of concern to their teachers. In the case of Neil, Mrs. Meijer felt that he was doing better than she expected him to do, based on his first-grade teacher's comments. This may have been one of the reasons that she never submitted his name to the special services department. Besides Craig and Pam, the only other target child whom Mrs. Meijer placed in her "has it, but can't put it together" group was Neil. Craig and Pam were both referred for special education. There was no evidence that Mrs. Meijer was surprised about either child's behavior in the first few days of school.

Dorr-Bremme (1982) found that "students play a collaborative part in structuring the classroom environment in which they are expected to learn and display what they have learned" (p. 460). This phenomenon was readily seen in the class and teacher studied. The "delicate interactional balancing act" spoken of by Erickson (1985, p. 44) was upset in the room when the class did not start to work together, or "jell," as Mrs. Meijer called it. She expected that at a certain point in the year the class as a whole would move from the acquisition of routines and expectations to the independent use of these skills. She expected that the children would take these skills and move into the heavily academic part of the school year with the interactional competence they had gained from working and living together in the classroom for two to three months. Mrs. Meijer's "big push" was from January to spring vacation. When the patterns of action and meaning did not begin to materialize as Mrs. Meijer expected them to, based on her previous years of experience, her morale was also at its lowest (see Figure 3.4, the rhythm of the year chart). This low point lasted for about six weeks, all through November and up until the winter holiday break. Her big academic push began after vacation, and by mid-January the class seemed to be into a smooth routine. By Interview 9, 3-23-82, she was able to say that most of the children were meeting her expectations.

Once the majority of the class got into the rhythm of the year, Mrs. Meijer remained concerned about those children who continued to set themselves apart. These children were out of step. They were in the wrong place at the wrong time. They said the wrong things at the wrong time. They could not put their completed papers in the correct wire basket. These children were not in tune with Mrs. Meijer's expectations for their interactional performance. Without a doubt it was Craig who set himself the furthest apart. He was the only child in the room to obtain a special education identity. He was to end up being placed into a class for the learning disabled. His problems were ubiquitous. He had social and academic problems in large groups, in small groups, during seatwork, in peer interactions, and in teacher-student interactions. No other target child so fully fit this pervasive pattern of incongruity nor so upset the delicate interactional balancing act in the room.

The school year had its ups and downs, its own rhythm if you will, for Mrs. Meijer. At the point in the year when Craig's and

Pam's problems stood out the most, they were both referred for special education. They were referred at the time of the year when Mrs. Meijer was most concerned about the class not jelling. There is not enough evidence to say firmly that a teacher's referral decisions are made at low points in the school year. There may have been other factors involved, but the evidence does show that the two children were referred at the time of the year when the class was not "jelling" for Mrs. Meijer. Further, when Mrs. Meijer reconsidered Steve and Joe for special education referral, she was pleased with the class's progress. She did not refer either boy.

I continued to go back to the data to try to decide what had made Mrs. Meijer refer Craig and Pam, but no other target children, for help. I believe that these children's overall interactional performance had as much to do with the decision as any characteristic of learning disabilities or other mild handicapping condition. Successful interactional performance in Mrs. Meijer's class included: knowing what to do and when to do it, the ability to start work independently, and following directions. As stated in the previous section (see Figure 19), it is in the constructing of patterns of action and meaning that teachers identify problem students. Problem children "point themselves out" like Craig did when he went up for scissors at art time when it was not his row's turn, stayed seated when all the other children had lined up to go home, sat in the path of everyone the day he had to sit on the floor for rocking in his seat, and poked his head in front of the flashlight beam after Mrs. Meijer had told them if they did it one more time, that would be the end of the science experiment.

The patterns that Mrs. Meijer looked for when she was trying to decide whether to refer a child for special education or not are summarized in Figure 20. The child's focusing ability has to do with the way the child is able to process the information that is given, both verbal and written. She looked at their interactional performance across a variety of classroom events. Her observations from the first days and weeks of the school year were crucial when she formed her first group of target children. These

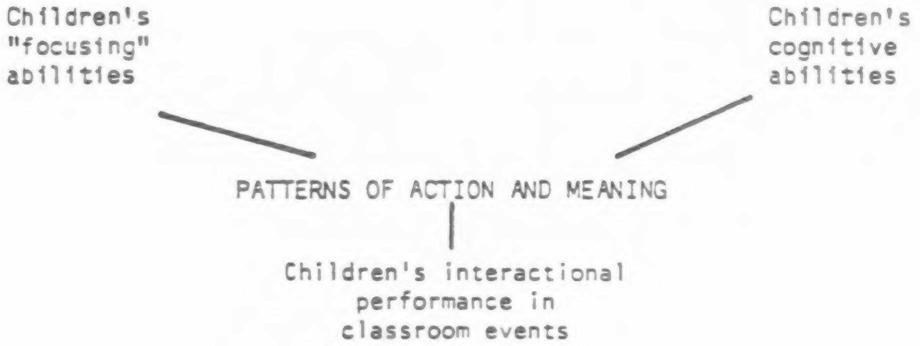

Children's "focusing" abilities
Children's cognitive abilities
PATTERNS OF ACTION AND MEANING
Children's interactional performance in classroom events

Figure 20: Patterns of action and meaning in setting children apart for special education referral.

factors were tempered by her own perception of the child's needs and of the services available in the school district. The interactional performance of a student influences "educational gatekeeping decisions and so students' educational careers" (Dorr-Bremme, 1982, p. 11). I will come back to the gatekeeper role of the teacher in the section on identification.

Teacher Observation and Practical Reasoning

The interactional performance of the children in the classroom was inextricably bound with Mrs. Meijer's observations and practical reasoning about her class. As was pointed out earlier in this chapter, not all of the teacher's practical reasoning is based on the interactions she sees. She does not even see all the interactions in the class. Teachers' grounds for decision making may emerge from the daily observation and reflection in which they engage. Yet little is known about how teachers actually pay attention in their own classrooms and make sense out of what they are seeing. As a result, little is known about the role that these ways of seeing play in a teacher's decision-making process. Mrs. Meijer's special education referral decisions were based on the sense she made out of the interactional performances of the children in her classroom.

Mrs. Meijer's early observations led her to make practical groupings among her children. The ramifications of these invisible groupings are discussed in the next section. She used these groupings as reference points, or family resemblances, to draw upon as she thought about the children at the beginning of the school year when there were so many unknowns. There is so much going on at one time in a typical second-grade classroom that it is impossible for a teacher to pay attention to every detail.

In the discussions of Mrs. Meijer's perceived ideas about the source of each of the three target children's problems I touched on, but did not develop, the idea that her referral decisions may have revolved around her perception of the source of the child's problems. Mrs. Meijer looked at Pam's problems as an "inner distraction." Craig's problems were a combination of an environmental distraction and his own inability to put all the pieces together in a holistic sense, an interactional distraction. Neil's problems were viewed by Mrs. Meijer as being a result of his parents' inability to parent, more of an outer distraction. She said that the parents figured in both Craig's and Pam's difficulties, but they were not judged to be major factors in either of these two children's cases as they were in Neil's. Mrs. Meijer did not base her referral decisions on any one perspective of the source of a child's problems.

As Mrs. Meijer observed her class and tried to make sense out of what she saw, she also looked at the difficulty of the curriculum that lay ahead for these children in this school district. She knew of the district's expectations because she had been teaching in the district for at least seven years. She also knew that few children in Pawnee School would move out of the district. It was a very stable neighborhood. For the "doesn't quite have it" children she saw a long struggle with school, always the "C" students, but apparently special education was not the answer for this group of children. For the "has it, but can't put it together" children she thought there was hope of success if they could be assisted in their attempts to put schooling all together. A knowledge of what was awaiting the children in the years to come was a factor outside the classroom context to be taken into consideration by Mrs. Meijer.

Teachers are guided by theories of perception and categorization when interpreting students' classroom behavior (Mehan et al., 1982). In the special education referral study previously cited (Mehan et al., 1982; Mehan et al., 1983; Mehan, 1984), Mehan and his associates compared teachers' accounts of student behavior with the actual videotaped incidents of student difficulties in class. The teachers saw the problems of the students stemming from within the students, particularly in their ability and psychological states (Mehan et al., 1982). The teachers were attributing the sources of problems to personality attributes of the children over situational factors.

The attributional process is part of a teacher's ongoing system of social perception (Palmer, 1983). A teacher's informal labels are based on ability and effort attributions. Achieving a special education identity gives a child a formal label, and "formal labels are an attributional antecedent indicating a history of failure" (Palmer, 1983, p. 425). Weiner (1976), in his attribution studies, found that a student's effort and ability as perceived by the teacher, combine interactively to influence the teacher's giving of rewards and punishment. Mrs. Meijer's referral of Craig and Pam to special education could be viewed as a reward given to them for their effort and denied to Neil because of his perceived lack of effort and ability. I have already pointed out that Mrs. Meijer viewed special education as a chance at success for a certain group of her students. Evidence does not support the conclusion that her referrals were made out of a sense of frustration with the child.

Identification of Mildly Handicapped Learners

The identification of mildly handicapped children in Mrs. Meijer's class began with her creation of practical categories that included all the children in her room. The first categories were general: children having problems and children not having problems. She soon began to refine these categories. The children having no problems were left alone at the beginning, while the children having problems became the target children. This group of eight children was further divided into the "has it, but can't put it together" group and the "doesn't quite have it" group. There were two other problem children who were not labeled until later in the year. One of these children had problems with adjustment to a new school, and the other child's problems were termed "developmental" by Mrs. Meijer. Later, the children with no problems, or benchmark students, became the "extra bright, really withit" group of six children. At times she referred to three of these children as being intellectually superior to the others in the room, but this group was not clearly seen as being discrete. The other ten children in the class were never given a practical group name, so I have called them the "normal" second graders. See Figure 21 for a diagram depicting Mrs. Meijer's practical categorization of her class resulting in one student achieving a special education identity in the 1981-82 school year.

I previously referred to the regular education teacher as occupying the position of gatekeeper determining who gets referred for special education. The teacher is a gatekeeper because he or she makes the decision about which children to refer in his or her classroom. There are some instances in which parents (as in Pam's case) or the principal ask for special services for a child, but usually it is the classroom teacher who brings a child to the attention of the specialists when a mild to moderate learning or behavior problem is suspected. When Mrs. Meijer was acting as a gatekeeper, she looked at the child's ability to learn in her classroom. Not being able to do the classwork was only part of the concern. She looked at the interactive way the child fit into her class. This included academic and social aspects, as well as how the child handled the materials and the curriculum.

Mrs. Meijer carefully considered the opportunities for extra help within her district. She knew what services were provided for children needing special education and she knew the people providing the services. The evidence supports that her referral decisions were heavily influenced by her perception of the

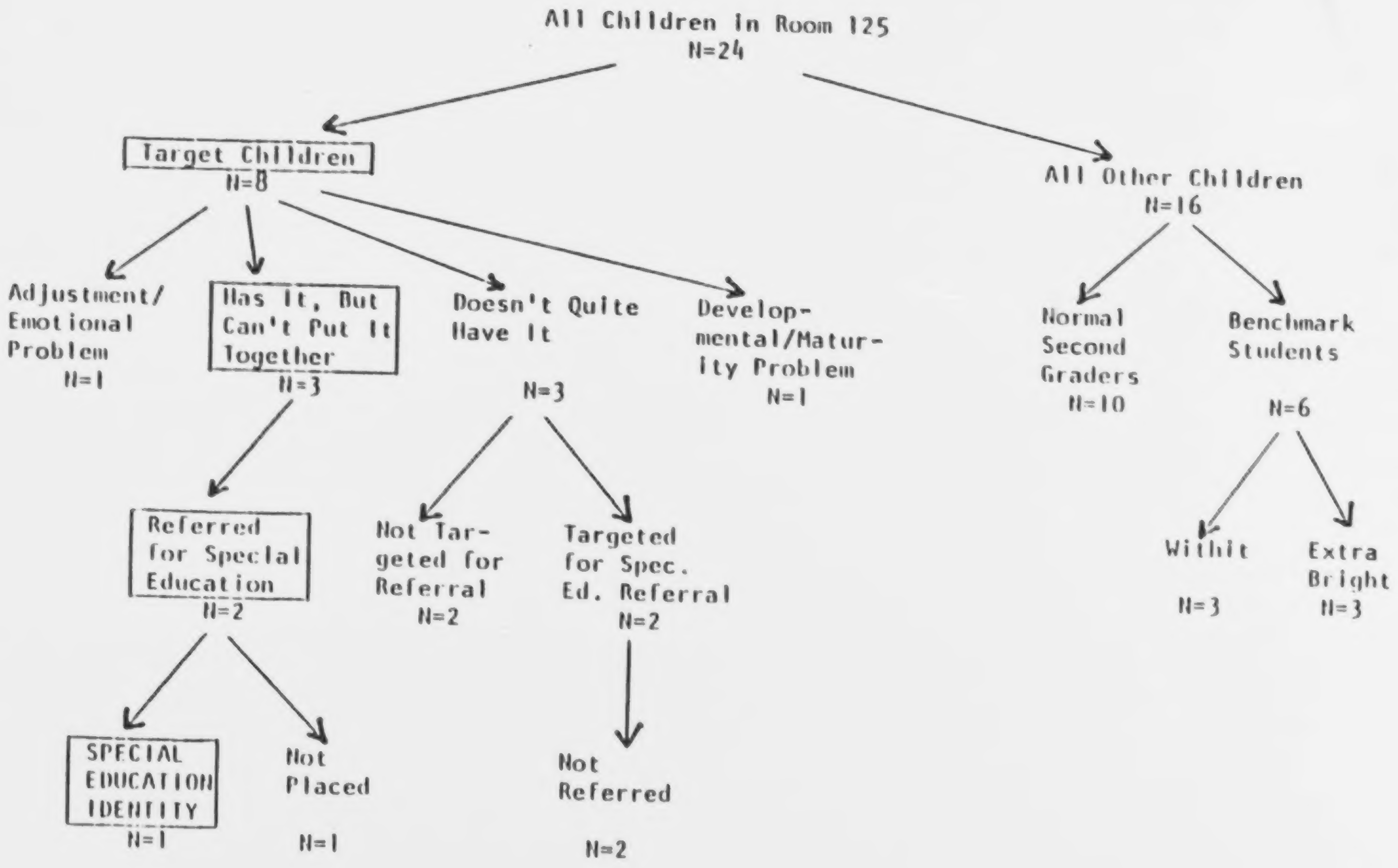

All Children in Room 125
N=24
Target Children
N=8
All Other Children
N=16
Adjustment/
Emotional
Problem
N=1
Has It, But
Can't Put It
Together
N=3
Doesn't Quite
Have It
N=3
Develop-
mental/Matur-
ity Problem
N=1
Normal
Second
Graders
N=10
Benchmark
Students
N=6
Referred
for Special
Education
N=2
Not Tar-
geted for
Referral
N=2
Targeted
for Spec.
Ed. Referral
N=2
Withit
N=3
Extra
Bright
N=3
SPECIAL
EDUCATION
IDENTITY
N=1
Not
Placed
N=1
Not
Referred
N=2

Figure 21: Getting a special education identity in Room 125.

available services in the Seneca School District. This consideration of the extra help available, although it had little to do with a child's particular difficulties, was an important factor when it came time to decide whether to refer the child to special education or to keep the child in general education. Both Craig and Pam had been formally referred for special education by the beginning of November. The referral process time span varied only slightly for the two children. Other target children were considered for referral, but the process was never set in motion for anyone else that school year.

The reasons for Neil and Steve not being referred for special education may have had as much to do with each boy's previous school history as with the difficulties each was encountering in second grade. They had both been referred, but not placed, in earlier grades. To my knowledge, the other target children--Joe, Mary, Pam, and Craig--had not been referred previously. Joe and Craig received remedial reading assistance. Joe also received speech therapy. Of all the target children, only Pam and Neil were not already getting some type of special help in school. To my knowledge, only Pam and Neil were receiving help outside school. Pam was being seen by a pediatrician, Neil by a psychologist. The three children from the "doesn't quite have it" group were looked at as referral candidates throughout the year, but none for the persistent amounts of time as the "has it, but can't put it together" children. Mrs. Meijer identified Steve on the second day of school as a candidate for extra help. Joe was mentioned on September 21 as being the next child to be tested after Craig and Pam were done. She said that Joe would need help if he was to go on in school. He was never referred for special services. Mary, on the other hand, was never mentioned as part of a group being set apart until January (see FN's 1-14-82), p. 5), but Mrs. Meijer, in interviews, had expressed concern for Mary's progress on many occasions before January. Mary and Steve, along with Craig, were the only children in the room not reading at grade equivalent or above by the end of the school year, as recorded on their group reading tests (see Appendix J).

The strong link between the children who were actually referred and Mrs. Meijer's perception of the district's services was one of the most striking findings. There has been criticism of those in special education for often giving a child a label (such a LD or EI) that just happens to be equal to the type of classroom that has space available in it at the time of the placement meeting. For example, there may be space in the LD class, but none in the EI class, so the child is labelled LD even though the problems are more emotional. Decisions about placement are often based on the availability of spaces in certain classrooms rather than on finding a program that meets a child's unique learning or behavioral needs, regardless of the label placed on the child (see Mehan et al., 1983, for further discussion). The stated intention of P.L. 94-142 is first, to decide what the child's educational needs are; second, to decide what type of program will best meet those needs; and third, to decide on a label for the child. This study provided evidence that regular educators refer children who they think will qualify for existing services.

Mrs. Meijer felt strongly that the LD resource room program at Pawnee School would benefit Craig. She apparently did not feel, however, that there were any special services available for her slow learners, the "doesn't quite have it" children. Even though they were unsuccessful with second-grade work, they lacked the needed ingredients to be considered learning disabled. What these needed ingredients were was never clearly defined, but the practical names of the two informal problem groups seemed to indicate that cognitive ability was a strong factor for Mrs. Meijer. She thought Craig and Pam were capable of doing better. They both had all the pieces of the puzzle; they just could not make the puzzle go together. She thought that Mary, Steve, and Joe were doing the best they could because they did not have the ability to do much better. Mrs. Meijer never believed that Pam was learning disabled. She did not use the word in reference to Pam as she did with Craig. She saw a needy little girl and wanted to get some help for her, even after being told ahead of time that Pam would not qualify. The counselor told her that Pam's achievement scores were too high for her to be considered for LD placement. The IEP meetings for Craig and Pam were held on March 3, 1982. The next day Mrs. Meijer told me, "There wasn't real action on either one. According to state guidelines they're performing their basic skills well enough to be uncertifiable" (FN's 3-4-82, p. 3).

Craig and Pam did not fall within the school district's parameters for identification as learning disabled. The district had a learning disabled category, but the decision of the placement committee that Craig was not learning disabled in March did not coincide with Mrs. Meijer's classroom determination that Craig was learning disabled. Wittgenstein (1958) talked about the type of category that is possible and useful, but is imprecise in its boundaries. This category has formal boundaries, but they may not coincide with the actual everyday usage of the term. The category "learning disabled" seems to be the type of category that Wittgenstein was describing. The building team was using the district's definition of learning disabilities (see Appendix A), but Mrs. Meijer had a different definition of learning disabilities that she was using based on her years of teaching experience.

There were two critical points in the year for special education referrals in Mrs. Meijer's classroom. The first was in late October-early November, at the getting-down-to-business time of the year. Craig and Pam were both referred during this time period. Mrs. Meijer's second crucial point was in late January-early February, after her big academic push had gotten underway. No children were referred at this time, but she strongly considered Steve as a candidate. On February 9, Mrs. Meijer told me that he would be next now that Craig's referral was completed. On February 23, she said, "I don't know what to do about Steve. I don't know whether to try to refer him before spring break or what" (FN's 2-23-82, p. 3). Although she never referred Steve, it appears that the disappointment of Craig not qualifying for LD services initially had much to do with her decision. Mrs. Meijer was also pleased with the way the class was moving along at this point, and this may have been a factor. The big academic push was a time of the year when she evaluated the children closely, thus making it a likely time for referrals.

Mrs. Meijer considered more than the list of behavioral descriptors on a special education referral form when she was deciding whom to refer for special education services. She took into account an "ensemble of items which mutually support and determine one another" (Gurwitsch, 1966). Mrs. Meijer's special education ensemble items consisted of (a) having the fundamental cognitive ability to perform adequately, (b) not being able to put the pieces of learning together into a whole that equalled success in school, (c) displaying frustration at not succeeding in school as opposed to being unaware of one's difficulties, (d) not being able to manage the interactional demands of the classroom, and (e) having parents whose actions were not detrimental to the child's growth. The last item is stated tentatively. It would be necessary to return in future years to see if this pattern really did influence her decisions. With Neil it seemed important, but it must also be noted that in May Mrs. Meijer told me that she had changed her mind about Neil's ability. She felt he was doing the best he could. She did not see existing services in the district meeting his needs, so in his case the ensemble of items that kept him from being referred for special education was stronger than the ensemble of items mentioned above. The evidence supports Mrs. Meijer's change of Neil's family resemblance over the school year. At the end of the year he more closely resembled a "doesn't quite have it kid" than a "has it, but can't put it together kid."

Mehan et al. (1983) found that educational decision makers make placements into special education by "available category after having reduced the range of alternatives at an earlier time" (p. 286). The construction of a special identity begins when the classroom teacher makes the initial referral. I believe that the data from this study support the idea that a teacher's referral decisions are partially determined, whether consciously or unconsciously, by the perceived availability of services in the school district.

Implications for Preservice Education

There are implications of this study for preservice education. Focused observation in differing types of classrooms needs to be started early in the training program. Observation should be augmented with guided discussion of selected pieces of videotape showing how children's interactional performances can lead a teacher to categorize children. Written vignettes such as the ones contained in this study could also be used as a basis of discussion for the videotape interactions, the actual classroom observations, and as a stimulus for preservice teachers to begin writing their own vignettes of classroom events. These written stories could be a starting point for the school district cooperating teacher, the university field supervisor, and the preservice teacher education student to look at the social interaction in a classroom and to discuss the teacher's role in the construction of student status, be it a special education identity or otherwise. (See Erickson & Wilson, 1984, for further ideas on the use of recorded data and for sources of obtaining videotapes of classroom interactions such as those described in this study. See Shultz, 1983, for further ideas and implications of the use of ethnography in educational settings.)

An example of preservice training in another occupation will be used to illustrate the importance of the field experience. In The Reality of Ethnomethodology, Mehan and Wood (1975) described how a rookie policeman follows a veteran cop around the neighborhood as she or he does the beat. Learning how to do the beat is accomplished when the rookie spends a great deal of time with her or his teacher.

> The rookie would learn to see and feel as his teacher showed him. He would learn how to do the beat, how to use what partial set of rules he was told, and most importantly how, in the day-to-day work at the scene, to generate new rules as previously unmet situations arose. (p. 77)

After reading what Mehan and Wood had to say in the previous citation, I wrote myself the following theoretical note. (See

Schatzman & Strauss, 1973, Chapter 6, for a discussion of the writing of fieldnotes.)

> In order to do the beat, may not a rookie teacher have to be actively taking part in the day-to-day work at the scene? It may only be possible for teacher educators to impart a "partial set of rules" to preservice teacher education students. If this is the case, this partial set of rules must be based on events, practices and procedures most nearly approximating what a teacher does. The teachers chosen by teacher educators to teach the rookies to do the classroom beat must be exemplars of sound pedagogy. The students need intimate firsthand knowledge of the classroom scene. Participant observation seems an ideal tool for accomplishing this end. (TN 2-7-82)

Moving from selected pieces of videotaped classroom interactions to the real "beat" of a classroom would put preservice "rookies" in a context where their observations would be more meaningful because there would be a past, a present, and a future time frame within which specific instances (such as the videotape selections) would take on a collective meaning.

Another important implication of this study for preservice teacher education has to do with the way the findings speak to the need for a teacher preparation program that gives preservice teachers an awareness and understanding of individual difference and of the need to adapt their teaching to each child's unique needs. There may be no one best way to do this. Some institutions of higher education offer course work in "mainstreaming" techniques or in "exceptional children." Some institutions may have designed their core teacher preparation course offerings around multiple-perspectives or heterogeneous-groupings approaches that take into account ethnicity, race, class, and gender, as well as exceptionalities in an integrated fashion. Whatever the approach used, I think that it is imperative for teacher training programs to require some coursework that specifically addresses the needs of handicapped children in regular classrooms. Preservice teachers should be taught how to distinguish between different types of problems in the classroom and what to do about teaching these children effectively once they are identified. Prospective regular educators need to learn how to teach children to succeed in school who are in need of more than a traditional textbook approach. Perhaps such a focus would reduce the number of referrals to special education of hard-to-teach children as opposed to handicapped children who are in need of very specialized methods or materials.

Teacher educators have recognized the importance of the beginning and of the closing of a school year for some time, as evidenced by the typical requirement that student teachers take part in either the opening or the closing of the school year in which they do their practice teaching, regardless of the university calendar. Another regularly occurring teaching phenomenon that was apparent in this study was the overall rhythm of the year, beyond its opening and closing. I suspect that this phenomenon is not unique to Mrs. Meijer and the particular group she taught in the 1981-82 school year. In this case, there are implications of the finding for preservice education, particularly as the rhythm of the year relates to the identification and referral of children to special education. There are times of the year where learning disabilities are going to stand out more than at other times. As Mrs. Meijer's focus changed from checking to see that the children knew the rules and routines to checking to see if they could complete the academic tasks assigned them, several children set themselves apart from the group as a whole.

Implications for Inservice Education

There are implications of this study for inservice education. The videotapes made in the course of this participant observational study (as well as those from similar projects) could be used to help inservice teachers look at the ways teachers set children apart into different groups in their classrooms.

There are many experienced teachers with little or no knowledge of how to teach special education children. Up until a few years ago it was uncommon to find a general education teacher training program that mandated a course in the characteristics of exceptional children, let alone in how to teach mildly handicapped children in the regular class. This policy is changing slowly as a result of P.L. 94-142. There are now 21 states that require at least one course, or are in the process of requiring a course, in working with exceptional children (Ganschow, Weber, & Davis, 1984). I suspect that Mrs. Meijer is not unique in referring children who she felt met existing special education services in her district. This being the case, it would seem appropriate for both preservice and inservice general educators to be made more aware of the classroom manifestations of mild to moderate learning or behavioral problems. One way this could be done is for a consultant to use selected pieces of videotape that show the target children's interactional performance. (See Erickson & Wilson, 1984, pp. 39-52, for suggestions on the use of videotape of everyday life in schools.)

A suggestion for the use of the videotapes was proposed by Mrs. Meijer herself. We were having a viewing session as we watched Craig on a videotape that I had made earlier in the day. Mrs. Meijer said that the school psychologist could learn as much about a child by watching the videotapes as the psychologist did in her classroom observations (Viewing Session 3, 12-8-81). Mehan and his associates conducted viewing sessions with teachers who had referred children to special education. They asked the teachers to stop the videotape to make comments about the children they had referred. (See Mehan et al., 1982, for the specific instructions given to teachers in the viewing sessions.) This method, although time consuming, could prove useful to educators carrying out systematic assessments of a target child's learning environment. It would be best if the viewing sessions were done as an accompaniment to actual classroom observation. The pieces of videotape could be used to focus on the fine details of a particular child's behavior, but on their own they would not provide the outsider with a fully contextualized look at the child's interactional competence in the classroom that is necessary to understand why the child became a referral candidate in the first place. Year-long participant observational studies are more appropriate for some types of questions than for others. The insights that have been gained from Mehan's study of teacher decision making (Mehan et al., 1982; Mehan et al., 1983; Mehan, 1984) and from this one can be used to inform practice and as a basis for further study.

Perhaps recent calls for recognition of the importance of the teacher's need to reflect and write about his or her own practice (Clark & Florio et al., 1982; Erickson, 1985) will contribute to a stronger professional image of teachers and give sanctioned recognition to the importance of their thoughts. Through writing down his or her thoughts about a particular child as a case study, or vignette, of the referral child, the teacher may come to a fuller understanding of the child and the classroom. This written document could be shared with outsiders such as those making systematic assessments of a target child's learning environment, administrators, fellow teachers, and others interested in the fine details of life in classrooms. This document could serve as an opening point of discussion in building team meetings when children having difficulties are discussed. In effect, the classroom observations, the viewing sessions with carefully selected pieces of classroom interaction, the written reflections of the child's teacher, as well as the more traditional referral documentation--test scores and a school psychologist's summary--would be used by the gatekeepers in an Individualized Educational Program Committee meeting to "triangulate" (Gorden, 1980, p. 12) the information about a particular child before giving that child a special education identity. This written documentation of a teacher's observations and practical reasoning could help to combat the feeling of powerlessness that has been noted in the role of the teacher (Lanier & Little, 1985; Mehan, 1984). Additional uses of such written documentation will be discussed under the policy implications of this study.

Hargreaves (1979) felt that by collecting and analyzing the comments of teachers it would be possible to uncover the teacher's common-sense knowledge about what he or she does. Through the collection and analysis of teachers' comments by supervisors, researchers, or fellow teachers, they are helped to make use of their own observation and practical-reasoning skills at a much earlier point in their teaching careers. Experienced teachers may make use of research findings about teachers' common-sense knowledge by "uncovering and reconstructing" their own common-sense knowledge (Hargreaves, 1979, p. 81).

An area that was identified in this study as needing further study is the pervasiveness of the practice of regular class teachers referring those children for special education for whom they feel there is an available program in the district. Poor academic achievement was not Mrs. Meijer's sole criterion for referral to special education. This may have been a result of her experience with other handicapped children over the years, or she may have had a deeper understanding of special education children. This is not known. It has been established that she did not perceive the resource room as a place for children with emotional problems or for those who could have been labeled as educable mentally impaired or "slow learners."

This study points to the need for special educators to be aware that regular educators may be making referral decisions based on their perceptions of existing special education services within their districts. These perceptions may or may not be correct. It is the responsibility of special educators and support staff (such as the school psychologists or teacher consultant) to communicate to regular educators the importance of looking at the individual child and his or her needs as opposed to looking at how the child will fit into existing programs.

It would seem that this is an appropriate time, a decade after the passage of P.L. 94-142, to reopen the discussion about the policy that has come to be known as "mainstreaming," placing a handicapped child in the "least restrictive environment" for that child. When the Education of All Handicapped Children Act was implemented in 1975 there was a great deal of financial support for inservice activity to prepare regular educators for receiving the handicapped child in their classes. The financial support for such effort is almost nonexistent today, and most districts regard mainstreaming as a natural part of their existence. Now is the time to start looking at the programs and services and to reopen staff dialogue as to their effectiveness. Since 1975, a great deal has been learned on both sides (regular and special education) about how to work with handicapped children.

Ten years ago teacher educators were preparing special education teachers to go out to the schools and "educate" regular teachers about the handicapped children they would be having in their classes. No longer does a special educator, in most cases, have to go out and teach regular educators about specific handicapping conditions. Most teachers think they know a learning disabled child, for example, when they see one. While this may or may not be the case, what is needed is to correct faulty conceptions and to talk about effective ways to identify and educate the handicapped child in the regular classroom. This is particularly true in buildings that have little staff or administrative turnover, and consequently have become used to certain ways of doing things. Teacher educators have a responsibility to prepare their undergraduate and graduate students for this expanded role. The faulty conceptions, if they are such, held by regular educators about whom to refer to special education may be partly a result of the referral process itself. Other researchers previously cited have pointed out the need to change current identification and placement procedures.

The type of identification process that I am proposing will require a greater amount of time than most current processes. This has important implications for all involved in the referral process, as well as for the school district official responsible for paying the salaries of the staff. It becomes all the more important that other measures are attempted before a child's case is taken to the building team for an official meeting to decide if a psychoeducational evaluation is necessary.

A different approach to the issue of making appropriate referrals to special education while at the same time meeting the needs of all students with learning and behavior problems was tried by Graden and her colleagues (Graden, Casey, & Christenson, 1985). The dual systems of regular and special education service delivery were maintained by Graden, but the focus of the special educator becomes one of providing indirect service to handicapped children through consultation and intervention with mainstream teachers rather than providing direct service to handicapped children. Graden et al. set up a model to: first, reduce the members of inappropriate referrals and placements into special education, and second, make the actual special education team decision-making process more relevant to instruction because the model builds in a step whereby classroom interventions must be tried before a referral is made to special education. This step provides the team with a data base upon which to draw during decision making. The model is "an ecological model of viewing student problems in the context of the classroom, teacher, and instructional variables as well as student variables and of attempting appropriate educational interventions that are not focused solely on the child" (Graden et al., 1985, p. 379). I believe this model offers a feasible and appropriate way to proceed with special education reform at this time. It is an improvement over what is currently happening in most schools, yet it is not as radical as the proposal of Stainback and Stainback (1984), to do away with the dual system of regular and special education. Nor is it as likely to receive only lip service, without the necessary financial backing, as happened in a program developed and implemented by Wang (Wang & Reynolds, 1985).

Graden et al. (1985) implemented a prereferral intervention system in six schools over a three-year period. They judged the model to be successful, in varying degrees, in four of the six schools. They identified system- as well as building-level factors that affected the success or failure of the model. At the system level the factors were: administrative support (both verbal and visible), provision of adequate resources by the district (the personnel and the time for consultation), system-level pressures to test and place children in order to receive reimbursement for special education students, a concern on the part of teachers and administrators for the impact of decreasing numbers of children in special education on resource allocations, a general resistance to change, and the highlighting of system-level and school-level problems (curriculum and teaching) that are brought out by the consultation model being advocated by the researchers.

The building-level factors affecting success or failure of the model were: the high demand on the consultant's time; some of the regular education teachers felt threatened by the model; the consultants were not all adequately prepared; by working with classroom teachers on interventions to be used in their classrooms, the consultant removed the "quick cure" the teacher formerly had if the child was placed into a special education program; and finally, the model was successful in buildings where there was a strong, internal impetus for change on the part of the staff. While these factors may seem logical, they are not always considered before school districts attempt to change current practice.

Some of the questions raised by the present study that may be addressed in further studies are: What types of children do other early elementary grade teachers in suburban schools refer to resource rooms? Are learning disabled children the only mildly handicapped children in suburban resource rooms, or are there children with other special education lables, such as emotionally impaired or educable mentally impaired in these rooms? Do suburban elementary school teachers differ from urban or rural elementary teachers in referring children to special education? The practice of referring children to special education based on the perceived availability of services, if found to exist across a range of teachers in a range of settings with differing socioeconomic and racial groups of children, would have broader policy implications.

Implications for School District Policy

There are implications of this study for school district policy. Recently, suggestions have been made that would require a "systematic examination of the child's learning environment and the nature and quality of the regular instruction received" before a student is referred or assessed for special education (Messick, 1984, p. 5).

Wang and Reynolds (1985) pointed out, "A basic problem for all students is that general education programs have been insufficiently adaptive" (p. 498). They applauded the efforts of Heller et al. (1982) and the National Academy of Science Panel on Mental Retardation, but pointed out that the panel failed to discuss the issues involved in the implementation of their own recommendations. To carry out systematic examinations of a referred child's learning environment, increased time to do the observation, increased money to compensate individuals for the additional time to be spent on each case, and the very real possibility of increased resistance on the part of regular educators to being "systematically evaluated" by an outsider would be necessary. The effect of such recommendations may be that regular educators would stop making referrals altogether to avoid the observations. The intended goal of the NAS Panel's recommendations was to reduce inappropriate referrals, particularly of male, minority children, who are overrepresented in programs for the mentally retarded.

Numerous studies of the identification of handicapped children have concluded with a call to change the way special education is currently funded (Gerber, 1984; Mesinger, 1985; Wang & Reynolds, 1985; Ysseldyke et al., 1983). Wang and Reynolds held special education funding policies responsible for the discontinuance of the total mainstreaming program they developed, despite its success, for both children--in terms of achievement--and teachers--in terms of positive attitudes toward the model. The Adaptive Learning Environments Model (ALEM) was set up to meet the needs of a broad range of students within a regular classroom setting, full-time mainstreaming, as opposed to children being pulled out of the regular class for special education (Wang & Birch, 1984).

There has been a major shift in federal incentives to classify handicapped children since Mehan did his study of the special education placement process in the 1978-79 school year. The focus of special education has shifted from "moral imperative and growth to fiscal efficacy and retrenchment" (Crowner, 1985, p. 58). Many states are moving away from a "search" for handicapped students toward decertification of some handicapped students, or at the least, to stem the rising numbers of children being identified, particularly as learning disabled. (See the "masses are burgeoning" article by Algozzine, Ysseldyke, & Christenson, 1983). Even as the nation's schools as a whole are undergoing declines in overall student enrollment, the percentage of students labeled learning disabled has continued to climb (Gerber, 1984).

I think that participant observational research techniques could be used to conduct systematic examinations of a learning environment (Messick, 1984). Some ideas for the ways that this type of research could be used to inform district policy follow. One, it could provide an opportunity for longitudinal studies of teachers, of children (for example, following the careers of children established in the early grades across school years and across classrooms), of particular institutional events (such as referring children for special education programs), of particular classroom activities or events (such as "worktime," Florio, 1978; or "first circle," Dorr-Bremme, 1982; or "getting the floor," Shultz, Florio, & Erickson, 1982), or of curriculum (such as implementation of a new program, textbook series, or remedial procedure).

Second, participant observational studies, such as this one, can provide a school district with a link to higher education that could serve both the district and the institution. By the nature of the techniques involved, the district has an opportunity to have a researcher-in-residence rather than a researcher who comes in, does some observing or testing and then leaves, rarely to be heard from or seen again, with the possible exception of the presentation of a written report. In participant observational studies, the researcher goes back to the participants to share the findings. These findings are then discussed and the participants have a chance to say, "Yes, that's exactly what I meant," or "No, I wasn't thinking of that at all." This allows for greater insight on the part of all involved. The institutions have field-reaction to their conclusions, and the reactions of the participants can be used to guide the implementation of research findings into practice, something that is sorely lacking from much of the research on teaching that has been done.

Third, studies such as this one can provide a school district with a document that would initiate a discussion of an institutional procedure such as how children are referred for special education. It may provide the opportunity for an experienced staff to carry out a self-study of an issue of curricular importance, such as the adoption of a new textbook series or the implementation of a new curriculum. I feel that this type of study could be the basis for teachers to start feeling more valued. One possibility might be that teachers who chose to participate in such self-study would be given credit toward master teacher status or merit pay if the district is exploring, or is involved in, such moves to upgrade the status of a teacher. The current fear of many experienced teachers is that merit pay or master teacher status will be based on the test scores of the children in their classes. If this practice were to come about, the consequences to public education and to the role of the teacher could be devastating. As an alternative, or in addition to process-product types of measures of teacher effectiveness, participant observational research as a basis for self-study would be an alternative way of deciding merit pay over the award of such, based on the pre- and posttest scores of children in a teacher's classroom.

Another implication of this study that affects school district policy relates to the way the teacher identified the children to refer for special education. I believe this study has shown that the identification of mildly handicapped children is not simply a matter of balancing the child's performance with a list of behavioral characteristics on a referral form. Referral is not a clear-cut, rational act. As the year progressed, I had the opportunity to observe the social construction of a special education identity. A better understanding of the ways teachers decide whom to refer to special education is needed before they can do a better job of identifying mildly handicapped children. In effect, this would entail an understanding of the social construction of problem student status on the teacher's part. This type of understanding is needed across the scope of teacher education: regular and special educators, administrators, preservice teachers, and teacher educators themselves.

Concluding Remarks on the Implications

The findings from this study point toward taking a closer look at how teachers socially construct a special education identity for certain children. I use the term "social construction" to mean that the teacher does not refer a child to special education because of some inner attribute that the child brings with him or her to the classroom. Nor is the child referred for special education because of some inner perception of the child that the teacher brings with him or her to the classroom. Rather, the child is referred for special education in the interaction of the two, as they are socially constructed. Mehan et al. (1983) described this as "individuals acting together in organized contexts to create and maintain the link between behavior and categories such as 'special education student'" (p. 141). The organized context in this case is a classroom.

It may be that the social construction of a special education identity is beyond the ways of seeing of most experienced teachers. Not only may it be beyond their ways of seeing, it may be beyond their ways of thinking about what goes on in their classrooms. This is not to say that teachers are incapable of using alternate ways of seeing, but to enable them to see their classrooms differently may not be a simple matter of teaching teachers to look at their classrooms in a different way. They must understand them in different ways. Shulman and Carey (1984) recently stated that educational researchers have moved beyond thinking of man as a rational being. They further suggested that educational researchers have moved beyond thinking of man as boundedly rational. Researchers are starting to think of man as a collectively rational being. "Human rationality, whether bounded or not, is practiced in the context of social exchange and human interaction" (Shulman & Carey, 1984, p. 515).

One far-reaching policy implication that I can foresee is the elimination of our current dual service delivery system for the mildly handicapped. In Figure 22 I present a model that shows how this might come about. Regular educators are currently responsible for some segments of a mildly handicapped child's education, and special educators are responsible for others. Preservice educators should be taught to look for the way that special education identities (as well as other identities, e.g., giftedness) are socially constructed. Practicing regular and special educators should also be presented with this way of looking at children through advanced coursework and/or inservice education. Classroom interventions could be designed that would increase a child's chances for success in the regular classroom without the need for a child to be given a special education identity (label) and to be removed from the regular class. Special and regular educators could work together within the classroom context to eliminate the need for a separate service delivery system for the mildly handicapped. Children would not need to go to pullout programs; the services would be part of their regular classroom experience. It is beyond the scope of this paper to go into this point further, but it certainly forms a research agenda for future endeavor.

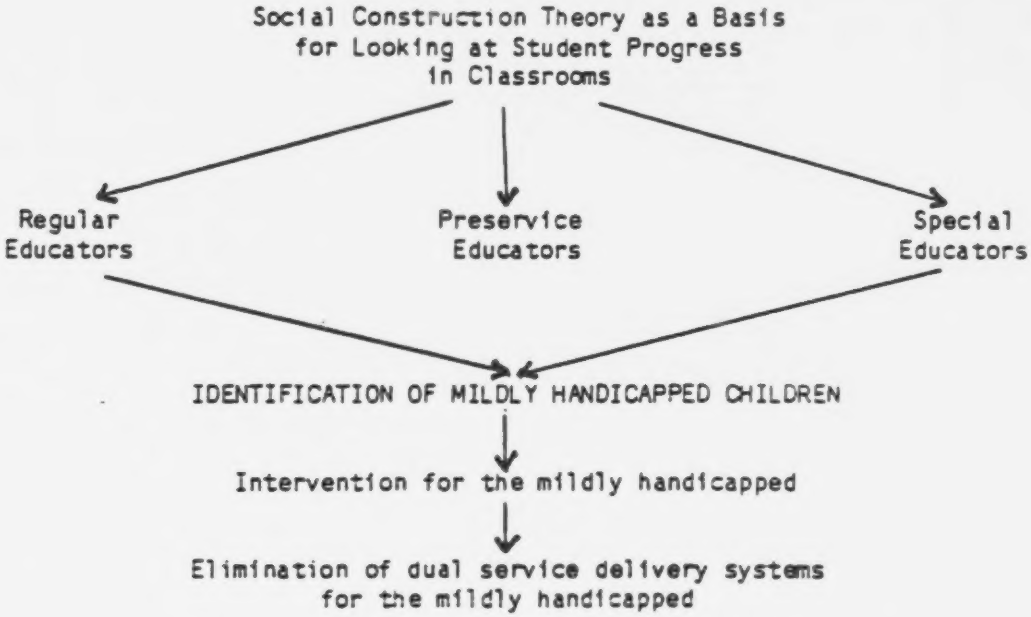

Social Construction Theory as a Basis for Looking at Student Progress in Classrooms
Regular Educators
Preservice Educators
Special Educators
IDENTIFICATION OF MILDLY HANDICAPPED CHILDREN
Intervention for the mildly handicapped
Elimination of dual service delivery systems for the mildly handicapped

Figure 22: A social construction model.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

PROJECT PERMISSION LETTER

September 9, 1981

Dear Parents,

This year I will be participating in a study of teachers that is being conducted by ____________________ University. The director of the study is ____________________, Ph.D., of the ________________________ ____________________ at the university.

The purpose of the study is to learn more about teachers' ways of paying attention to, and thinking about, daily events in their classrooms. Findings from the study will be used to develop new methods for educating beginning and experienced teachers.

During the study my classroom will be visited by observers who will take notes on what happens during classroom activities. Periodically the classroom will be videotaped. I will view the tapes with _________ and his staff and will be interviewed about my observations and thoughts on the daily events that were taped. The contents of the tapes and the identity of all those who appear on them will be kept confidential. The tapes will not be broadcast--they will be shown only for research and teaching purposes, and no real names will be used in any reports written about the study. Two types of videotaping will be done: general shots of the whole classroom, in which individual students will appear only as part of the total class, and more individualized shots focusing on particular children from time to time. In the second type of taping, a wireless microphone will be worn by the child to record his or her voice. Past experience is that children enjoy wearing the microphones; they do not find them uncomfortable or embarrassing to wear.

If you have any questions about the study or if for some reason you do not want your child to be individually videotaped during it, please call me here at school at ____________________.

Sincerely,

(Teacher's signature)
____________________ Public Schools

APPENDIX B

STANFORD ACHIEVEMENT TEST, CLASS PROFILE

STANFORD ACHIEVEMENT TEST
Primary I, Form A
10-81, Grade 2

CLASS PROFILE

Grade equivalent	Subtest	Stanines 1 2 3	4 5 6	7 8 9
3.3	Vocabulary		8	14
2.6	Reading A	3	10	9
2.8	Reading B		12	9
3.0	Reading Comprehension		12	9
3.2	Word Study Skills		8	13
2.5	Math Concepts	2	13	7
2.9	Math Comprehension		12	10
3.5	Listening Comprehension		11	11
3.1	Total Reading		11	10
2.7	Total Math		14	8
3.4	Total Auditory		7	15
3.0	Complete Battery		12(57%)	9(43%)

Number of children scoring in each range.

*Test taken on 10-1, 10-2, 10-5, 1 student absent on 10-2, therefore some numbers total 22 and some 21 for the stanine counts.

APPENDIX C

BEHAVIOR RATING SCALE--TEACHER'S CHECKLIST

Case Coordinator______________________________ Teacher______________________________

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

School Team Referral

Date______________________________

Student_________________________ Grade_______ Birthday_________________________

Parent(s)_________________________ Address____

Home Phone_______________________ Work phone - Father/Mother_______________________

Family Physician______________________________

Check appropriate area(s) of concern

Academic_________________________ Social________________ Physical________________

Health____________________________ Emotional_______________ Other__________________

Description of concern

Additional information related to the concern (i.e.: CA60, previous teacher)

What other services is the child receiving?

What type of assistance are you requesting?

Parents were made aware of this referral on____

Teacher's signature_______________________ Date____________________________________

Principal's signature_____________________ Date____________________________________

Copies: Parent
Teacher (CA60)
Principal
Case Coordinator
Special Education Office

IN SCHOOL SCREENING DEVICE

Teacher's Checklist

Child's Name ______________________ Date ______________________

Grade ______________ Age ________ Teacher ______________________

ACADEMIC INDICATORS	YES	NO	NO EVIDENCE
1. Reads word-by-word			
2. Reads below grade level			
3. Mispronounces words			
4. Has difficulty in blending sounds			
5. Gets mixed up on sound/symbol association			
6. Cannot rhyme words			
7. Cannot remember sight words			
8. Reverses words in reading			
9. Forgets what is read			
10. Prefers to print (4th, 5th grades)			
11. Has poor eye tracking skills			
12. Cannot copy from chalkboard to paper			
13. Prints from bottom to top of each letter			
14. Cannot draw basic geometric shapes			
15. Shapes letters inconsistently			
16. Spaces poorly between letters/words			
17. Forgets formation of letters			
18. Has difficulty staying on the line			
19. Reverses words/letters when writing			
20. Cannot tell time to the hour			
21. Cannot tell time to the minute			
22. Shows poor one to one correspondence			
23. Cannot recall basic math facts through 10			
24. Cannot recall basic math facts through 20			
25. Arithmetic skills below grade level			
26. Forgets specific arithmetic processes seemingly known			
27. Uses fingers or other devices to count			
28. Unable to draw a human figure in proportion			
29. Gets letters out of order when spelling			
30. Quickly forgets spelling words			
31. Spells the same word two different ways in same assignment			
32. Confuses sounds when spelling			
33. Cannot recall sequence of syllables			
34. Spells below grade level			
35. Spells phonetically			
36. Uses bizarre spellings			
37. Does unacceptable written work			
38. Gets confused when given a series of auditory directions			
39. Does not know left and right on self			
40. Does not know left and right on others			
41. Starts written work but does not finish			
42. Does not start written work			

IN SCHOOL SCREENING DEVICE

Teacher's Checklist
Page 2

SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL INDICATORS	YES	NO	NO EVIDENCE
1. "Blows up" easily			
2. Cries easily when upset			
3. Has poor peer relationships			
4. Disturbs others			
5. Is inattentive			
6. Demands constant teacher attention			
7. Cannot work independently			
8. Attention seeking "show off" behavior			
9. Disruptiveness: tendence to annoy/bother others by talking			
10. Unwilling to volunteer			
11. Unwilling to talk in class			
12. Uses inappropriately loud voice			
13. Talks out without permission			
14. Daydreaming			
15. Verbalizes a dislike for school			
16. Disobedient			
17. Uncooperative in group situations			
18. Easily distracted by noises/movement of others			
19. Always on the go			
20. Falling out of the chair			
21. Is out of seat often			
22. Fiddles with small objects			
23. Taps fingers or toes			
24. Prefers adult companionship			
25. Social withdrawal; preference for solitary activities			
26. Prefers to play with younger children			
27. Prefers to play with older children			
28. Easily flustered or confused			
29. Lacks interest in environment, general bored			
30. Trips other children			
31. Hits or pokes other children			
32. Bites other children			
33. Fist fights on playground			
34. Shocks or physically attacks children in the classroom			
35. Hits adults			
36. Refuses to talk to teacher			
37. Refuses to talk to other children			
38. Afraid to come to school			
39. Fearful of new situations			
40. Specific fear (i.e., of the dark, of dogs)			
41. Never smiles, no facial reactions			
42. Easily led by others			
43. Destructiveness in regard to property			
44. Negativism, tendency to do the opposite			
45. Thumb sucking			

IN SCHOOL SCREENING DEVICE

Teacher's Checklist
Page 3

HEALTH/PHYSICAL INDICATORS	YES	NO	NO EVIDENCE
1. Holds reading materials close to face			
2. Slumps forward when writing			
3. Grasps pencil improperly			
4. Has a speech problem (lisp, articulatory, substitution, stuttering)			
5. Draws poorly			
6. Shows clumsiness, awkwardness, poor coordination			
7. Alternates use of hands for activities			
8. Tense, unable to relax, rigid to touch			
9. Headaches			
10. Difficulty in bowel control, soiling			
11. Nausea, vomiting			
12. Stomach aches			
13. Sluggishness, lethargic			
14. Drowsiness, sleep			
15. Frequent unexplainable absences			

APPENDIX D

DEFINITIONS OF LEARNING DISABILITY, EMOTIONAL IMPAIRMENT, AND EDUCABLE MENTALLY IMPAIRED

STATE OF MICHIGAN DEFINITIONS

Rule 340.1713 Specific learning disability defined

Specific learning disability means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations. The term includes such conditions as perceptual handicaps, brain injury, minimal brain disfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. The term does not include children who have learning problems which are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor handicaps, of mental retardation, of emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

Rule 340.1706 Determination of emotional impairment

The emotional impairment shall be determined through manifestation of behavioral problems primarily in the affective domain, over an extended period of time, which adversely affect the person's education to the extent that the person cannot profit from regular learning experiences without special education support. The problems result in behaviors manifested by one or more of the following characteristics:

a. Inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships within the school environment.
b. Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances.
c. General pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression.
d. Tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.

Rule 340.1705 Determination of educable mentally impaired

Rule 5 (1) The educable mentally impaired shall be determined through the manifestation of all of the following behavioral characteristics:

a. Development at a rate approximately 2 to 3 standard deviations below the mean as determined through intellectual assessment.
b. Scores approximately within the lowest 6 percentiles on a standardized test in reading and arithmetic.
c. Lack of development primarily in the cognitive domain.
d. Impairment of adaptive behavior.

(2) A determination of impairment shall be based upon a comprehensive evaluation by a multidisciplinary evaluation team which shall include a psychologist.

(3) A determination of impairment shall not be based solely on behaviors relating to environmental, cultural, or economic differences.

Source: Michigan Special Education Rules, as amended August 13, 1980, P.A. 451, 1976.

APPENDIX E

FIELDNOTES FOR FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 1981

Day 11 Friday Sept. 25, 1981

8:40 T arrives. Seemed a little disappointed with her parent turnout. Pammy's mom, Neil's parents, Carrie's parents, couldn't remember about John's parents--if they came. Gail's did not come. T comments about the black circles under eyes (Neil, Pammy, Carrie). Mentioned that she learned last night that Neil and his younger swim an hour every night in a swim club.

9:03 OPENING Children all arriving. Boardwork for today:

1. letters-A,B,C
2. Mighty Math
3. Spelling-p. 4
4. Math-red 9-10, yellow 37-38
5. Journal

Word Bank	
skating	skiing
swimming	sledding

9:06 Neil says: "Oh, word bank....Great." ON (T still in hall with Elizabeth's mother) [Kids just visiting. Midget cars seem to be the big thing for the boys now.]

9:10 OPENING ACTIVITIES 1. Hot lunchers-Fri. is spaghetti day (T, Paul, Jessica at tissue box).

9:11 Jessica asks T if today is a popcorn party. She says yes for those that earned it. T tells them that there is a letter to go home today about some testing in October that is very important.
2. Pledge

9:13 T asks Gail to pass out handwriting paper and Karen to pass out Mighty Math papers.

9:16 HANDWRITING T starts explaining how to print capital A. "Push down," "Two down strokes""and then across" (T walks around checking their guide letters). T tells John and Neil to blow noses, "lots of snuffies today." Pammy and Sarah get up to blow too. T tells them capital B should not have a "loopy" in the middle and she shows them on the board what she means. (T tells John to blow his nose again, but he just wipes it. He still is not blowing.)

9:21 Craig, "Are we going to go all the way to Z again?" T asks him what is on his boardwork for today and says that's all he should be concerned with. She demonstrates C and walks around observing guide letters. (T gets Kleenex box and puts a stack of them on both John and Neil's desks.)

9:23 BOARDWORK EXPLANATION T goes over directions to Mighty Math. Goes over what they are to do, subtraction. Becky is already working. T is doing an example on the board because many didn't appear to understand about the coins.

9:27 T directs them back to boardwork list. Tells them to take out their spelling books. Has Stacy read the directions and then has kids read what the pictures are so that there will be no misinterpretations, e.g. it's a gate, and not a fence.

9:30 T tells them to put their spelling book in the tub she has placed back there today, not overflowing the basket. Tells them to sign the top of the page now.

9:31 T changes names of math groups. (Snoopy group is now the Red group and Woodstock is now Yellow group.) MN (T had told me earlier that she planned to do this because the kids in Woodstock group were getting confused about what group they were in.)
Tells kids to rip out the appropriate math pages for their group. Then tells them that when they put their math book away, they should get out their journal. They are to open up to the front of their journal.

9:33 JOURNALS Tells them that their date should start on the next line after her initials. She puts an example on the board:

```
9-21-81 -------------
 -------------------
 ---------------- M.M.
9-24-81
```

Craig asks, "Where do you put it, because I don't have any space? T tells them they have to write two sentences today. Tells them that the word bank is on the board. They are to write about one of these sports. T gives them a two-sentence example for herself.

9:38 T tells them to stack up their assigned pages in reverse order. She goes through how to stack with them. Asks them if they have any questions about their morning seatwork. John asks about the word tobbaganing. Tells them she'll be calling for spelling groups first and then be meeting with reading groups.

9:40 Several children already take their completed handwriting paper up to the wire baskets. T is getting boxes with

SPELLING spelling materials out. Calls her first group. Donald comes up and gives T his spelling folder from Monday. (He had taken it to his desk.) T explains how to do the graph and how today they'll have the same words as Monday. She mentions studying them at home. T, "Did you all bring your half sheets?" (None of them did.) Group is: Steve, Jessica, Paul, Blake, Jimmy and Mary. (Steve forgot his pencil and has to go back to get it.)

9:47 (at desks) Craig turns around to ask Judy a question, and she tells him to "do it yourself." He next asks Pammy and she tells him, "I can't tell you." (It is Mighty Math that he is asking about.) T still giving the spelling test to the first group.

9:50 ON--Many children already on journals and that's their last seatwork assignment (Donald, Elizabeth, Sarah, and Joe).

9:52 First spelling group is finished and returning to their seats. Paul says, "Oh. That was tiring." T calls next group. This group remembers to get paper and clipboards without being remineed, except Neil. T explains graph to them. (Each child's # correct from Monday pretest is graphed.)
Lowest group: Craig, Royce, Joe, Karen, Carrie, Elizabeth, Becky, Neil, Pammy, and Judy.) (ON--Donald is all finished with his work. He wants to go to listening table. Seems unsure if he's permitted as it's so close to the spelling groups. He looks toward T several times but she doesn't acknowledge him, so he goes ahead.) Kids in spelling groups are distracted by Don's record. It's on the wrong speed. No, it's "Fox in Sox"--high speed. Jessica comes back to join Donald.

10:00 T sents this group back and calls up the last group (Donald, Sarah, Gail, Andrew and John). She shows them a sample of how their paper is to be set up. (Steve just sitting at his seat, but work is still on it. Mary is standing and looking around, rest of the kids not in spelling are doing seatwork, except Jason, who is at listening table.) Pammy still on Mighty Math. ON (Large crowd at listening table now interfering with the last spelling group.) ON-(Neil didn't seem to notice that he had been moved to a different spelling group today.)

10:10 Craig is all excited as he's finished all of his seatwork. T sends last group back and gets herself ready for reading groups.

10:10 READING GROUPS T calls Webs and Wheels group back. Circus is topic today. ON-(Pammy has a terrible cough today. She uses her number line for math. Craig is now working on work from the Not Done side of his folder.) Royce on math worksheet.

10:17 Steve comes by to tell me that he's just done his last thing. Craig comes over for help on a worksheet. Pammy now asking Craig for help on a math problem.

10:20 (Knock on door) Class is going over to Mrs. Field's (other second-grade teacher) room with their snack to see a movie.

10:25 FILM "Bread and Jam for Francis," introduced by Mrs. Field. T leaves the room. Mrs. F. goes to her desk, corrects papers.

10:37 Mrs. F. leaves room for a minute. Several children notice her absence.

10:42 Kids are putting fingers up in front of light. They don't know that Mrs. F. has slipped back in the room. She tells them that this is kindergarten and first-grade behavior, not second grade.

10:45 Back in Room 125. T with W&W group again. Has to interrupt to talk to "boys at listening center." ON-(All appear to be done with seatwork except Gail and Pammy.)

10:47 T calls Secrets group back. They meet on the back carpet today. They are reading orally today. T shows them about paragraphs.

11:00 T glances at Craig, Jason and Blake, who are discussing how long it takes to get to Cedar Point. The W&W people are doing their workbook page now.
T puts character names up on board for Secrets story: Juanita, David, Sara. She gives them a question to read to find out. ON-(Jason anticipating Rainbows being called up next and is trying to get Blake to go over by the listening table so they can use it when the Rainbows people leave.)

11:04 T tells Secrets which workbook page to do. (Craig comes over and asks me how many pages of writing I have.)
T tells Pammy that the reading teacher will be here soon so she'd better get going on her reading.

11:05 Rainbows gets called up to table. Too many for the table so T has them meet at the carpet. They read aloud in their group. Secrets doing their reading and worksheets. ON-(Pammy reads audibly during silent reading.) ON-(Becky is making a picture that says: "I love you Mrs. Meijer.") T calls out to Andrew, Paul and Donald to do their own work. They were talking at their seats. She reminds Rainbows not to "clip off their endings." Says these are just as important. They are reading a play. T assigns parts. Craig asks to be a troll, but T tells him that he's already read and that Sarah is already chosen as troll.

11:12 Pammy coughs. T looks up, hearing how bad it sounds.

11:16 Play still going on with Rainbows. Other kids are quietly working or at listening table. T reminds the group of the picture clues as they read.

11:20 Dismisses Rainbows with no workbook page today. Paul, Andrew and Donald back asking T a question about their worksheet that they can't figure out.

11:25 T says they are waiting for the reading teacher and suggests that some may want to take their bathroom breaks now. T asks Royce to sit down and tie his shoes, then watches to see if he can do it correctly. T asks if anyone has papers to be initialed. Craig says, "I do." (T tells me she's stalling.)

11:30 Still waiting for the reading teacher. She's here. Several kids say, "Here she comes." T notices Andrew and Jimmy horseplaying. Says to Andrew, "I don't want to see that again, or you will have discipline meted out." (ON--About the strongest statement I've heard her make.)

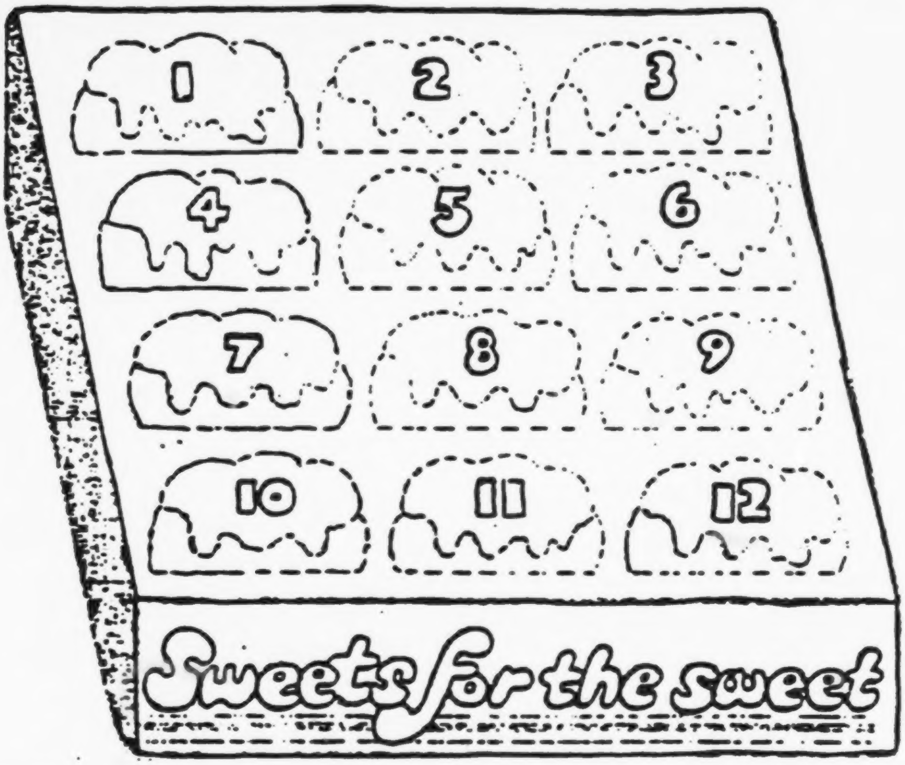
APPENDIX F

THE CANDY PAGE

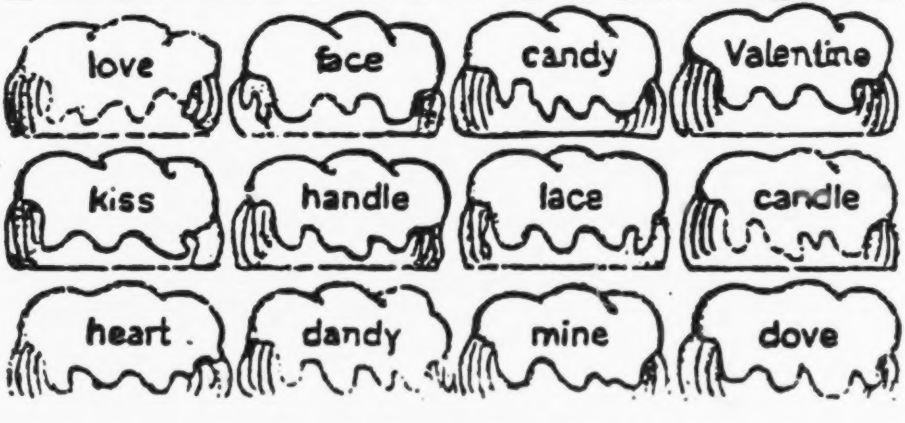
February
Alphabetical Order

Candy Wrappers

Please help the candy maker get ready for Valentine's Day. Put each candy in the box in alphabetical order.


1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
Sweets for the sweet

On the back of this paper write a Valentine poem to someone you love. Use the rhyming words in the candy box.


love
face
candy
Valentine
kiss
handle
lace
candle
heart
dandy
mine
dove

APPENDIX G

END-OF-THE-YEAR READING TEST RESULTS FOR INFORMAL GROUPS

End-of-Year Reading Test Results for Informal Groups

	Gates-McGinitie, Form A 5-81 (end of 1st grade)		Gates-McGinitie, Form B 5-82 (end of 2nd grade)	
	Vocabulary	Comprehension	Vocabulary	Comprehension
Paul	3.7	3.7	4.7	3.6
Andrew	2.8	3.7	5.6	5.2
Elizabeth	2.8	3.7	3.3	3.5
Donald	3.7	3.2	5.6	5.2
Sarah	2.5	2.7	3.5	4.3
Jessica	2.4	2.5	3.2	5.7
Craig	1.7	2.0	2.6	1.8
Pammy	2.7	3.1	3.7	3.6
Neil	2.5	3.2	2.8	4.3
Steve	2.4	1.9	3.0	1.8
Joe	3.0	1.8	5.6	3.5
Mary	3.6	2.1	3.6	2.2

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Chapter 3

CASE STUDY OF MRS. TOBIN:

SOCIAL CONTROL IN A SECOND-GRADE CLASSROOM

This case study focuses on how one experienced second-grade teacher saw what she saw in her classroom and how she learned to interpret what she saw. Not only is a theoretical overview of a particular, concrete situation provided, but at the same time the case study is shown to support a general picture of human, social interaction. First the physical setting of the research site is presented. This is followed by a variety of empirical assertions regarding the characters and events from the site. Finally, second-order claims are made concerning the meaning of the initial empirical assertions.

David Boersema

CASE STUDY OF MRS. TOBIN:

SOCIAL CONTROL IN A SECOND GRADE CLASSROOM

Conceptual Ground

Introduction

Quentin Skinner (1985) has recently suggested that there has been a return of 'Grand Theory' in the human sciences. He remarks:

> During the past generation, Utopian social philosophies have once again been practised as well as preached; Marxism has revived and flourished in an almost bewildering variety of forms; psychoanalysis has gained a new theoretical orientation with the work of Lacan and his followers; Habermas and other members of the Frankfurt School have continued to reflect on the parallels between the theories of Marx and Freud; the Women's Movement has added a whole range of previously neglected insights and arguments; and amidst all this turmoil the empiricist and positivist citadels of English-speaking social philosophy have been threatened and undermined by successive waves of hermeneuticists, structuralists, post-empiricists, deconstructionists and other invading hordes. (pp. 5-6)

This return to Grand Theory is meant in the sense that social thinkers and commentators are once again _social_ theorists, committed to the view that an experimental, quantificational model (such as seen to be held for the natural sciences) is inappropriate to, and incoherent concerning, the human, social sciences in their studies of human, social institutions and practices. Furthermore, these thinkers and commentators are once again social _theorists_, committed to the view that some overarching conceptual understanding of human, social institutions and practices is both possible and imperative (epistemically and morally).

As noted from the remarks of Skinner above, this return to Grand Theory has come from numerous sources and directions, including post-positivist work in the philosophy of science (e.g. Kuhn) and non-positivist work in continental intellectual traditions (e.g.. Foucault). A frequently-heard criticism of these theorists is that they are too 'soft' and speculative, they rarely (if ever) provide 'hard' data or empirical studies to support their theoretical claims and positions. This objection no longer seems credible (if it ever was) in light of the detailed historical work done by Kuhn and Feyerabend, for example, in the history of science, and the detailed historical work done by Foucault, for example, in the history of such social issues (and the accompanying institutions) as criminality, sexuality and insanity. This present essay is intended as a small contribution to this return to Grand Theory. The paper's purpose is twofold: first, to illustrate how mundane situations like the day-to-day events in a second-grade classroom are reflective of broader social practices, institutions and ideologies, and second, to suggest that a reasonable understanding of such mundane situations like the day-to-day events in a second-grade classroom can only come from a hermeneutical, qualitative approach. In particular, this paper will draw from the thought of Foucault (and, though less directly, Kuhn).

Foucault and Kuhn

Among those thinkers whom Skinner labels as Grand Theorists, he includes Foucault and Kuhn. Both might appear somewhat mislabelled as 'Grand Theorists,' Foucault because his work has seemed neither grand nor theoretical but very restricted in scope and historically particularized in nature and Kuhn because his work has seemed unrelated to human, social institutions and practices other than that of science and almost exclusively the natural sciences. Nevertheless, Foucault is a Grand Theorist in Skinner's sense, as his historically particularized works have been written within his larger objective of trying to show us how modern societies exercise control through knowledge and power, especially at the institutional level. Social and political control results from the exercise of power and conceptions of knowledge which enable such exercise of power, not so much by individuals as by institutions. Human, social institutions shape and are manifestations of social control. They are so in large part by their determination of what counts as legitimate and appropriate knowledge and categories of knowledge and by the accompanying standards of normality. As Philip (1985), commenting on Foucault, claims:

> The normal child, the healthy body, the stable mind, the good citizen, the perfect wife and the proper man--such concepts haunt our ideas about ourselves, and are reproduced and legitimated through the practices of teachers, social workers, doctors, judges, policemen and administrators. The human sciences attempt to define normality; and by establishing this normality as a rule of life for us all, they simultaneously manufacture - for investigation, surveillance and treatment - the vast area of our deviation from this standard. (p. 67)

Foucault's approach is a constructivist one. That is, his position is that reality--at least, social reality--is a human, social construct, not something we discover by 'bumping into it.'

This social constructivism is not the simple truism that humans construct society (i.e., without human there would be no social reality) but is a much more significant claim. It is the claim that what humans do discover by 'bumping into it' is socially determined, and socially determined for Foucault primarily at the level of institutional power and control. The world we live in, the truth(s) that we know (and can know) are not to be conceived in terms of a correspondence to an 'objective' reality we encounter but rather in terms of a coherent system (for Foucault, a discourse) shaped by social concerns and actions. Just as discourse is possible only within a context of discursive rules, so, too, human, social practices are possible only within a context of social rules (i.e., institutions). Further, just as the meaning (and truth) of statements are possible and understandable only within a discourse and the underlying discursive rules, so, too, the meaning (and truth) of human, social events and activities are possible and understandable only within a context of human, social interaction and the underlying social rules/ institutions. This paper is a case study of such interaction within the educational institution.

It was remarked above that, like Foucault, Kuhn is not obviously a Grand Theorist. His most renowned work deals with notions of scientific revolutions and scientific progress not with overarching conceptions of human, social interactions. His less widely read work is even more restricted and is even less directly related to social and political issues. While this may be, his consistent divergence from positivist models of science (for both natural and social sciences) and his alternative view of the philosophy, history and sociology of science do suggest a general picture of theory and practice, not only for the natural sciences, but for the human sciences as well. Kuhn stresses a view of science not as doctrine, but as activity, as human, social practice, such that it cannot be isolated from other human, social practices and (a la Foucault) institutions. The emphasis on paradigms as vehicles of scientific change carries with it a rejection of progress as foundational and cumulative. Instead, progress and change are seen as switches in allegiance to particular paradigms, each being self-contained and coherent systems. Much like Foucault, Kuhn dismisses a view of reality and truth as correspondence to an 'objective' world in favor of a view which focuses on coherence, consistency and interpretability. This view of looking at science from a sociological perspective, with an accompanying emphasis on the role and importance of science education, is also a social constructivist position. Science is a human, social practice (and institution) which interacts with the world by constructing models which are internally coherent and account for observed phenomena. A final important point which Kuhn highlights is that even the observed phenomena are not simply discovered but--because observation is in large part theory-laden--is also constructed. This last point is particularly relevant to the present case study, as the project of which it is a part concerns observation in the classroom--how teachers learn to see and interpret what they see.

To repeat, then: this paper is a case study of a second-grade classroom, and the guiding question of this study is how do teachers learn to see what they see in the classroom and how do they learn to interpret what they see in the classroom? As will become evident, the conclusions drawn are that a Foucaultian (and Kuhnian) analysis of social practice and institutions provide a legitimate overarching theoretical base for understanding the events and characters in this mundane educational setting. Not only is a theoretical overview of a particular, concrete situation provided, but at the same time a case study is shown to support a general picture of human, social interaction.

First, the physical setting of the research site will be presented. This will be followed by a variety of empirical assertions regarding the characters and events from the site. Then a few second-order claims will be made concerning 'the meaning' of the initial empirical assertions. That is, more sweeping, interpretive statements will be offered to throw light on the empirical assertions by providing a larger theoretical background within which they can be viewed. Finally, some general remarks will be given showing a (Foucaultian) broad, theoretical context and providing an interpretation of the significance of the initial assertions.

Overview of the Setting

My research site was an inner-city elementary school in a mid-sized Midwestern city. Because of budgetary problems, the school was scheduled to be closed at the end of the 1984-85 academic year. While the school was in a residential neighborhood, there was a large factory immediately west and southwest of the school. I was told by the school secretary that in the spring of 1984 there were 197 students enrolled (grades K-6). The classroom to which I went was one of two second-grade rooms in the school. Actually, it was a mixture of first and second grades in this particular classroom. There was a fair amount of mobility in this classroom in terms of students' families moving into and out of the school district during the school year, though never more than twenty-five at any one time. One student (Eupaulito) was only in the room for the first two days, while two other students (Sam and Scott) did not enter the classroom until May 2, 1984 (about five weeks before the end of the school year). Throughout most of the year, there were twenty-four students, eight in first grade and sixteen in second grade. There was a teacher's aide (full-time) in addition to the teacher. During the course of the year, there were two student teachers, one from January to March and the other from January to June, each of whom came in one day per week (though on different days).

The classroom was on the southwest corner of the school building and faced the parking lot (see Appendix, Figure 1). The southern wall of the classroom was almost entirely windows. As a result, attention was often drawn outside (e.g., because of the weather or events taking place in the parking lot).

The classroom (see Appendix, Figure 2) was approximately 20' x 40', with the door at the northeast corner of the room. The floor was completely carpeted. The room was divided (by me) into three major sections. The rightmost section was that which contained the desks of both the teacher and the aide. In addition, the aide's reading corner (i.e., where the aide conducted reading groups) was here. The waste baskets, pencil sharpener and storage cabinets were also in this section of the room, as well as the math charts (i.e., charts on the wall recording the students' math test outcomes; see Appendix, Tables 1 and 2). The middle section of the room was primarily taken up by the students' desks. The leftmost section of the room contained the teacher's reading table (i.e., where the teacher conducted reading groups), the art table (i.e., where students worked on art projects or where art supplies were kept while students worked at their desks on art projects) and the listening center (i.e., where there was a cassette player and several sets of headphones). In addition, the spelling chart (see Appendix, Table 3) and the citizenship chart (see Appendix, Table 4) were posted on the wall in this section. The spelling chart recorded the students' spelling test outcomes, and the citizenship chart recorded the teacher's weekly citizenship ratings of the students.

Daily classroom activities were quite structured. On the cabinets next to the door was a chart indicating a daily routine (though unlabelled). The chart, approximately 18" x 24" and always visible to the students, read as follows:

Morning

8:35 - 9:00	Opening exercises
9:00 - 10:15	Reading
10:15 - 10:40	Bathroom - Free time
10:40 - 11:25	Lunch

Afternoon

12:10 - 12:30	Read book
12:30 - 1:40	Reading - Language Arts Spelling
1:40 - 2:00	Gym Mon. Wed. Fri.
2:00 - 3:00	Writing Social studies Science Art Music

A 'normal' day followed this schedule rather closely. At 8:35 the bell would ring, indicating to students that they may/must come into the school building and go to their classrooms. (Before the bell rang, the students were not supposed to be in the building except for students who were having breakfast in the gym.) I often arrived at the room by 8:15 and already at that time the teacher had seatwork written on the front board for students to do when they came into the room at 8:35. She also already had work placed on students' desks for them to do when they came in. (When I arrived in the mornings, sometimes the teacher was in the room and sometimes not. Even when she wasn't, the door was always open, lights were on and usually a small radio was playing softly on her desk, tuned to a local 'soft rock' station.) The aide rarely was in the room before the bell rang at 8:35.

As students entered the room, there was usually a variety of activity; some students immediately sat down and began working, others sat at their desks watching other students, and still others talked among themselves or 'fooled around' (e.g., teased one another, chased one another, taunted one another). The teacher or aide inevitably within two or three minutes would tell the class as a whole or individual students to get to work, often reminding particular students that they did not have yesterday's work completed. The teacher would then take roll and the aide would call students, by row, to go to the pencil sharpener and sharpen their pencils if they desired. While taking roll, the teacher also would ask who was buying lunch on that day, who brought a lunch and who was going home for lunch.

After roll was taken, the teacher would pick a student to 'do the calendar.' That is, the student would go up to the teacher and stand next to the calendar at the front of the room. The student would then lead the class in reciting (approximately) the following: Today is (e.g.) Monday, May 14, 1984. The student would then return to his/her seat and the teacher would read from a book some historical fact about that particular date. The selection of which student 'did the calendar' on a given day, was, as best as I could understand, determined by seating arrangement. That is, a particular student 'did the calendar' today because that student sat behind the student who 'did the calendar' yesterday. Several times while I was there, the teacher asked whose day it was, and always several students would shout out names, usually concurring on a single name. This determination by seating arrangement was superceded, however, in the case of student birthdays. If a particular student had a birthday on a given day, that student 'did the calendar' in every such case.

After 'doing the calendar' the teacher would lead the class in the pledge of allegiance. An American flag (3' x 6') hung in the front of the room above the front chalkboard. The students all stood at their desks while they spoke the pledge. Upon finishing, the students would sit back down and work on their seatwork. At this time the teacher would preview her plans for the day for the class and explain any work that she felt needed explaining at that time. Then she would read a story at the front of the class while students worked at their seats.

Around 9:00 the teacher would stop reading and go over to the reading table. At this time the aide would also go there. As learned both from overhearing them and from their comments during interviews, they would discuss at this time which reading groups each of them would take that day (or, at least, that morning). The aide would then go to her reading corner and call a reading group. At the same time, the teacher would call a different reading group to the reading table. Those students not called would remain at their desks and work. As students went to their respective reading groups, there was no pre-arranged seating patterns. Students with the teacher would sit on chairs around the reading table, and students with the aide would sit on the floor in her reading corner. Reading groups usually lasted 30-40 minutes. When they would finish and be dismissed, the other (remaining) reading groups would then be called. At that point the students from the initial reading groups would work at their seats while the other students were in their respective reading groups.

Between 10:00 and 10:30 the second pair of reading groups would be dismissed. Students continued to work at their seats until they completed it. The teacher and the aide would either go to their desks and grade student papers or go around the room checking on and aiding the students with their seatwork. As students finished their work, they could have 'free time.' They could read at their desks, go to the listening center to listen to tapes, quietly play in the back of the room or quietly congregate at the art table to read, write or do art work. (As the year progressed and I became more a part of the classroom community, students took this time to interact with me.)

Around 10:40 or 10:45 the teacher would tell students to return to their seats. She would then explain the math seatwork for the day. After explaining the concepts and what the students were to do, she and the aide would go around the room checking on and helping students as they did their work. If the students were given a math test, they were given it at this time. Only on very rare occasions did any student complete the math seatwork before lunch. If it happened, the teacher or aide would have the student perform some function such as straightening up an area of the room or delivering a message to the main office.

Around 11:20 the teacher would tell students to start finishing up and get ready to leave for lunch. When the bell would ring at 11:25, the teacher would stand at the doorway and call students, by row, to line up behind her. She then dismissed them for lunch. During all of my visits to the classroom, neither the teacher nor the aide ever stayed in the room during lunch. However, on a few occasions the teacher kept the class inside because the students had been particularly unruly that morning (i.e., not getting their work done but talking among themselves and doing other unsanctioned activities).

In the afternoon, the teacher and the aide would arrive at the classroom almost always betwen 12:00 and 12:10 (closer to the latter). They both tended to arrive at the same approximate time, and more often than not they arrived together. The room was kept locked during lunch and when the teacher arrived after lunch she always let me into the room before the bell rang at 12:10. When the bell would ring, the students would enter the building and go to their classrooms. As students came into the room, their behavior was much the same as in the morning (some going to work immediately, others not). As students settled down to work on their seatwork from the morning, the teacher would read a story to the class from the front of the room and the aide would grade student papers at her desk.

Around 12:30 the teacher would stop reading. Then she and the aide would call reading groups (with this process being the same as in the morning). Late in the school year, when students were being taught script (cursive) writing, this was done at this time of day. As in the morning, after students had attended their reading groups and had completed their seatwork, they were allowed 'free time.' Usually between 1:30 and 1:45 both the teacher and the aide would dismiss their final reading groups of the day and the teacher would take those students out for recess who had completed their work and had not been disruptive. If the weather was good, they would go outside; if not, they would go downstairs to the gym. The aide stayed in the room with the students who were not allowed to go to recess and graded papers at her desk. Between 2:00 and 2:15 the teacher and students would return to the room. At this point, depending on the day of the week, the teacher would go over one of several topics with the students (e.g., art, social studies, or music). The teacher would explain the material or project at the front of the room, and then students would work on that material or project (usually at their desks) until around 2:45, at which time the teacher would tell the class to begin wrapping things up for the day. If the class had a spelling test, it would be given at this time (i.e., between 2:15 and 2:45). The bell for the close of the day would ring at 2:53. The teacher would dismiss students, by row. Students would line up, in gender-based lines, in the hall next to their lockers. At 3:00 the teacher would dismiss them for the day.

There were, of course, peculiarities about each day's events and activities, but the above account is quite paradigmatic of the daily routine. This daily routine did not vary greatly over the course of the school year.

Empirical Assertions

Preservice training is often criticized as being too theoretical and not practical enough. While such criticism is somewhat unfounded, it is no doubt true that no preservice program can adequately prepare someone for the nuances of day-to-day teaching. Learning to teach must inevitably continue (if not begin) on the job. Part of what is learned is practical ways of seeing and making sense of classroom events of a mundane, daily basis. An important research question, then, and the overarching question guiding this present research was: how do teachers make sense of everyday classroom events and how do they come to have this ability? In short, what do teachers see and how do they learn what and how to see? As corollaries to this initial question are the following, more specific, questions: (1) How are teachers' ways of seeing learned and how do they change over time (both across years and within a given year)? (2) How can or does the larger social setting (e.g., inner city vs. suburban) affect what teachers come to notice and interpret in their classrooms? (3) How do teachers' emic perspectives differ from the researcher's etic perspective of the classroom characters and events? (4) How might practical ways of seeing vary between teachers (who are, more or less, instructionally effective in terms of student academic achievement outcomes)?

An underlying assumption of the research was the apparent truism that a classroom setting constitutes a society in miniature, or at least a model of a society. Within this social setting the teacher serves as a visible focal point of activity and local mores. She shapes, more than any other single character at the site, the tacit and explicit rules of expected and acceptable behavior. Much, if not all, of what she comes to see (or how she comes to make sense of the setting and the characters) is a function of this 'shaper' role. Her role, both assigned and presumed, as the central authority in the classroom setting determines in large part (at least) her actions and perceptions of the classroom social structure. As subsequent discussion and analysis will show, the assertions developed below reflect this.

As noted earlier, reading groups focusing on grammar rules were a major endeavor during afternoons (in terms of time spent on an 'academic' task). The class was divided into several reading groups, with both the teacher and the aide working with reading groups (simultaneously) for a large part of the afternoon. Students not involved in a reading group at any given time were supposed to be at their desks doing seatwork (either spelling or math) or, when this was completed, quietly engaged in an approved activity, such as listening to a tape at the listening center or reading a book. Even while working with a reading group, however, the teacher seemed concerned to maintain seatwork students 'on task.' That is, the teacher seemed to be concerned that the students at their desks were in fact doing the work that they were supposed to be doing. The concern seemed strong enough that the teacher (and the aide) would interrupt reading groups in session to insure that this was done. This is illustrated in the vignette below. What is also illustrated by this vignette is a seeming lack of encouragement of peer teaching among the students.

Peer Teaching

The following events took place on the afternoon of Thursday, 2-23-84. The teacher called the Spinners group to the reading table. (The Spinners group was the top level reading group. One of the students, Gabriel, was not in class on this day.) the students came to the table and sat in the following configuration at the table:

Teacher

Laurie

Joel Ricky

Carlos S.

At the same time the aide called the Towers reading group to her reading corner. (See Figure 2 for the relative placement of the reading table and the reading corner.) The teacher read a story to the students in her group and then explained that the lesson that day was about the contextual meaning of words. She then had students read to themselves from their textbooks. While they were reading, the teacher said to me that she wanted to tell me something later when the class went outside (for recess). (I was sitting next to the lsitening center, about three feet behind Carlos S.) When the students finished reading to themselves, the teacher started to explain the notion of context. She picked a word ('delve') and tried to use it in a sentence. After a moment's hesitation, she remarked that she couldn't think of a good example for 'delve,' so she went over various meanings of the word 'bank.' While she was doing this, the aide (from her reading corner) said: "Vanessa. Jina. That's enough. Thank you." The teacher stopped speaking and looked up when the aide spoke. (Vanessa and Jina were at their desks, approximately in the center of the room.) A few minutes later another student, Ben, was walking around the room. The teacher's group was reading to themselves again. The teacher spoke: "Ben, are you done with your work?" Ben: "No." Teacher: "Then why are you wandering?" Ben: "I need an eraser." Jina: "Vanessa's got one." Teacher: "Vanessa, do you have one?" Vanessa: "I don't know where it is." Teacher: "Look in your desk." Vanessa opened her desk top and pulled out an eraser. Ben took it back to his desk, used it and then put it back on Vanessa's desk. The aide left her reading group and went out of the room. A few moments later (less than a minute) she returned and said: "I have ten erasers here." She set them on her desk and returned to her reading roup. About ten minutes later the aide dismissed the Towers group and called the Sunshine group to her reading corner. Three minutes later the teacher dismissed her group (commenting that they had been a good group that day) and called the Skylights reading group to the reading table. (Skylights was the lowest level of the second-grade reading groups.) The students sat in the following configuration around the table:

Teacher
Jina
Barb
Instructional
Chart
John
Vanessa
Juanita

The teacher remarked that today they would go over vowel sounds. While going over them, the teacher noticed that two students at their seats were talking (Jason was at Jamie's desk and they were talking.) Teacher: "Jason, take your stuff and go to the round table." He gathered some papers and went to the listening center (which was next to the round art table). The teacher then continued working with her reading group and Jason, it seemed, looked around the room without working on his seatwork.

Several features about the characters and the setting at the research site are borne out by the events described above. First, there is the suggestion that the teacher did not encourage (and perhaps discouraged) peer teaching. She did not, apparently, consider that student conversations, especially at times of seatwork, were matters of one student asking another student for help (and, in fact, asking another student because the teacher and the aide were involved with reading groups, which students at their seats were told early in the year not to interrupt). Both the aide and the teacher interrupted their reading groups to 'discipline' students who were talking, yet not only was the talking not very loud (I didn't hear either Vanessa and Jina or Jason and Jamie), but there was no clear indication (at least to me) of the nature of their conversations. Given the fact that both the aide and the teacher were involved in their reading groups, the conversation might well have been cases of one student helping another with the seatwork upon the request of the other student. However, neither the aide nor the teacher attempted to discover whether this was what was going on.

Besides perhaps revealing something about peer teaching, this short vignette exposes and highlights several other aspects about the research site. For one thing, the removal of Jason from other students (by telling him to go to the round table) suggests the teacher's sense of the interplay between space and behavior. That is, she saw the threat of unacceptable behavior (and the punishment for unacceptable behavior) as being a function (at least in part) of spatial proximity. By enforcing spatial distance between the 'disruptive' students, she shortcircuited future threats of such behavior (and enacted the appropriate punishment).

In addition to spotlighting the teacher's sense of space, the events portrayed in the vignette pointed to the interplay between the teacher and the aide, particularly in pointing to the important role which the aide served for the teacher in terms of what was seen in the classroom and in terms of social control.

Beyond these two features (i.e., the use of space and the interplay between the teacher and the aide), another characteristic of the research site was revealed by the events in this vignette, viz the teacher was very concerned to maintain classroom order and to maintain students 'on task.' These three features will be considered in turn.

Use of Space

On numerous occasions, including that noted above, the teacher made use of space in order to abort what she saw as disruptive behavior (or potentially disruptive behavior) or in order to punish inappropriate behavior. This usually took the form of sending a student to another part of the room. In the vignette above, Jason was told to "take his stuff to the round table." As exemplified below, the teacher often resorted to this tactic. On Thursday, 5-24-84, the teacher was in a reading group at the reading table. I was at the art table speaking with a student when the teacher called across the room: "Antonio! Take your papers and come over here (pointing to the listening center). Tom, take your papers and stand at (the aide's) desk. You're both being naughty. Antonio, you weren't here yesterday. You can't afford to waste your time."

Moving students to other parts of the room, however, was not the only vehicle used by the teacher in spatially dealing with unacceptable behavior. She also isolated students by either moving them and their desks away from other students or by moving other students away from them. The first sort of spatial isolation is illustrated by the fact that late in the year Ben's desk was often moved away from the other students and was either next to the teacher's desk or next to the doorway. On 5-3-84 his desk was not only moved next to the teacher's, but it was faced away from the class. The second sort of spatial isolation is illustrated by the fact that from 1-18-84 until the end of the year the teacher had an empty desk in front of Aries and Gabriel next to her. Prior to that time Laurie sat in front of Aries and on many occasions the teacher would tell them to stop talking. (She usually told Aries to stop talking.) Gabriel, while still being next to Aries, did not interact very much with her, often telling her to be quiet when she spoke to him during their time for seatwork.

While these cases indicate that the teacher intentionally made use of spatial proximity in the determination of classroom behavior, she did not seem to make use of space in other ways. For example, Juanita, who had difficulties academically almost the entire year and was one of three students retained at the end of the year (Barb and Gladys being the other two) sat in the southeasternmost desk in the room. (Aries, also seen as a 'problem' student, was seated most of the year in the other back corner of the room.) Nonetheless, Juanita's seat was in a 'high traffic' area of the room. Not only was her desk very close to the aide's reading corner, but much of the movement from one side of the room to the other went directly past her desk. Both the teacher and the aide remarked that Juanita spent a lot of her time simply looking around the room (often at people as they walked by her desk). On 5-15-84, however, several student's desks were moved, including Juanita's. She then sat, still in the back, in the second row from the left (Gabriel on her left, Renee in front and Carlos M. on her right). Prior to this move twelve other second-grade students had passed more math tests than she had, and six times she had missed two or more spelling words on her weekly spelling tests (see Appendix tables). After 5-15-84 Juanita passed thirteen math tests (in four weeks), such that only eight students passed more math tests than she, and she didn't miss more than one word on any weekly spelling tests. Also, in the four weeks after the move, she received two of the seven good citizenship ratings that she received during the entire year. Although no causal connection is being claimed here between apparently improved academic performance and the change in seating, a correlation is there. Furthermore, it is not implausible to suggest that a student's physical isolation from the class is related to a student's social or academic isolation. A student's spatial isolation could very well contribute to a student's sense of community and, as will be proposed below, even a sense of self-identity.

Another example of the significance of space in the classroom, which the teacher did not seem to explicitly consider, was that of the spatial problems of students in the front of the room.

The desks in the front row were immediately adjacent to the front wall. Consequently, those students in the front row faced not other students or a large part of the room, but (for the most part) the chalkboard. The students sitting in the front row (Jamie, Barb, Tavi, Miles and Ben) often got into trouble for talking and looking around the room. However, given the fact of a chalkboard looming in front of them (an arm's length away), it could be that a student would tend to seek some mode of stimulation and communication. Visually there would be little to stimulate the student. A 'natural' tendency might be to then initiate stimulation through communication with others. With the exception of Tavi, all of the students who sat in the front row were fairly often told to stop talking and do their work. As noted earlier, Ben was even moved away from the other students. Their tendency to talk with other students might have been a function of their spatial location in the classroom. While the teacher made use, then, of space as an element in the determination of classroom behavior, she might have made greater (or different) use of it.

One important use of space that was made, and one which also points to the significance of the division of labor between the teacher and the aide, was that of the placement of the two reading areas in opposite corners of the room. This was important in the sense that this allowed the optimum visibility of the room for the teacher and the aide together. That is, if the teacher was concerned that she not only could conduct a reading group, but also could 'keep an eye' on students at their desks doing seatwork, then this spatial arrangement gave maximum visibility for the teacher and the aide to see any area of the room. (Of course, with the reading groups in the opposite corners of the room, each group was minimally disturbed by the other group.) This spatial arrangement and its likelihood of functioning effectively both required and highlighted another important feature of this classroom setting, viz. the close interaction between the teacher and the aide and their functioning as a unit. By having an aide and by having her where she was in the room, the teacher's eyes and ears (and control) were, in a sense, doubled. Quite simply, the presence and subsequent actions of the aide shaped what the teacher saw in terms of classroom events.

Significance of Aide

As noted in the original vignette above, it was the aide who noticed Vanessa and Jina talking and who spoke to them. As this indicates, and as became more and more obvious, the presence of another adult (another 'teacher') in the room shaped in large part the social setting and day-to-day events in the classroom. The time spent by the aide grading student papers was time that the teacher spent with other activities. The presence of the aide in the room allowed the teacher to take some students (those with their work done) for recess while other students (those without their work done) were left behind in the room attended. This helped to shape and reinforce the policy of rewarding 'good' students by letting them play at recess, while punishing 'bad' students by keeping them on task. The presence of the aide allowed the class to be partitioned into four reading groups, two meeting simultaneously. This seemed to serve several functions. First, it allowed smaller reading groups to be a feasible reality. (The alternatives which the teacher alone would have faced would have been either larger reading groups--and so less individualized instruction--or more class time spent on reading groups--and so less time spent on other activities.) Second, it resulted in fewer students being at their desks engaged in seatwork at any given time. Given the teacher's apparent concern for maintaining students on task, this meant there were fewer students at their seats who needed 'to be watched.' Besides the fewer students 'to be watched,' there were two 'watchers,' together commanding a total overview of the local terrain. They had the kids surrounded!

In many other ways the presence of the aide was significant. The students had two adults/teachers to go to for help or advice or consolation. The teacher had another adult in the room with whom to interact. Often the teacher and the aide would speak to each other across the room (both about personal and professional matters). The absence of the teacher on a given day would necessitate the acquiring of a substitute teacher. The aide could and would take over the daily routine as much as possible on those occasions. (There were times when a substitute teacher was in the classroom, along with the aide. On those occasions, the students seemed to see the aide as the 'authority figure' in the room.) There were even a number of occasions when students would refer to the aide by the teacher's name. Almost always when this happened the student would quickly correct her/himself, indicating perhaps that this slip of the tongue suggested that to the students the identities of the teacher and the aide were somewhat conflated.

The following narrative displays much of the interactions between the teacher and the aide. On Thursday, 2-16-84 a student teacher was in the room along with the teacher and the aide (and myself, resulting in four adults in the room on that day). (The student teacher is referred to below as '370.') 370 asked the teacher if she should do the calendar. The teacher said yes. Then the teacher went to the front of the room and read a story while students worked at their desks. 370 was sitting at the teacher's desk looking at the teacher. The aide was at her desk sorting papers. After a moment, the aide got up and wrote on the subtraction chart. Shortly, the teacher (still reading) showed the students a picture from the book she was reading to them. Meanwhile, the aide went around the room returning graded work. 370 was still at the teacher's desk. At about 9:00 the teacher finished reading and said: "Some of you listened very well. Some of you didn't." The aide was writing words on the board in her reading corner. 370 was still sitting at the teacher's desk. The teacher put the book on her desk, picked up a yardstick and walked back to the front of the room to explain the students' seatwork. Towers and Skylights each had eight sentences to copy and vocabulary words to insert in them. Sunshine had seven other sentences and accompanying vocabulary words to do. Then the teacher called for the attention of Towers 1: "Towers 1, listen." She explained their work to them. 370 was still sitting at the teacher's desk. The aide was standing at her desk. After the teacher was done explaining seatwork, the aide went to her reading corner and called the Skylights group. 370 went to the art table and called Towers 2. The teacher called Sunshine to the reading table.

Jamie, Jason and Renee were the only students not in a reading group. They were all sitting at their respective desks. Jason was talking to Jamie. Renee was watching them. After a few minutes, while the teacher's group was reading to themselves, the teacher came over to me and said: "You should take these three and they'd all be covered." We laughed. About ten minutes later, the aide got up and went over to the teacher's reading table to get an instructional chart. She then went back to her reading corner.

This narrative points to several interesting things. First, it displays the division of labor and close interaction between the teacher and the aide. Both have their jobs to do, and both go about doing them. The teacher could spend her time performing one task while the aide performed another. Each appeared to perform her respective task without needing to check with the other as to what to do or when to do it. However, besides this feature being demonstrated, the narrative points to another aspect of the setting (which was also pointed out by the original vignette above), *viz* the teacher was concerned with maintaining students on task. This concern requires closer attention.

Maintenance of Students 'On Task'

Both the narrative just given and the original vignette presented above speak to the issue of classroom management and the teacher's desire to maintain students on task. The very physical set-up of the classroom and the structuring of the day can be seen as pointing to the desideratum of order. The students' desks were aligned in straight rows, and on several occasions students were told to straighten their seats (when the teacher saw them as 'out of line'). The presence of the daily routine chart next to the door spoke of a well-ordered day, and, as noted, this routine was followed rather closely.

Besides these somewhat implicit indications of order, there were other, more overt, signs of order (and consciously-sought and constructed order) in the room. For example, in the mornings before students arrived the teacher would make sure that students' desk tops were cleared off, and then she would place seatwork on their desks so that they could/would start working when they came into the room. Frequently she would tell students as they came in that they had work to do, to sit in their seats and not "run around the room." Another example of order being maintained was the teacher's practice of calling students by row whenever the students were to leave the room (e.g., for recess or to go home at the end of the day). Both the calling of students by row and the criterion of 'row silence' as a determinant of which rows were called first were signs of the desideratum of and the maintenance of order in the classroom.

Beyond the simple maintenance of classroom order, the teacher seemed to place a high premium on order being manifested in the form of students being maintained 'on task.' That is, a major aspect of classroom order seemed to be that students were doing work when they were supposed to, where they were supposed to, and, indeed, in the order they were supposed to. This aspect can be seen in the following vignette. On Thursday, 4-5-84, shortly after the aide had dismissed her second reading group of the afternoon, she said: "Jamie, do you have your work done? You're supposed to have your math done before you do your spelling." Jamie moved some papers around on his desk. A moment later (less than a minute) he took a folder to the aide's desk. Meanwhile, another student, Aries, was doing her seatwork at the art table (next to me). Laurie and Gladys were also at the art table, quietly drawing. The teacher (from the reading table) said: "Aries, take your work to your seat." Aries didn't move. A moment later the teacher said: "Aries! I want you to go to your seat." She went. A short time later, the aide (from her desk where she was grading papers) said: "Jamie, come here. You can't just erase the wrong answer and then turn it in. This is the fourth time. You're wasting my time. I want you to get this done and not do anything else until it's done."

This vignette shows the importance to the teacher/aide that students did their work. The aide's insistence that Jamie do his work and not do anything else until it was done points to this. Furthermore, her insistence that he do his math before his spelling seems to indicate that the order in which he did his work was also important. Finally, the teacher's insistence that Aries work at her desk indicates that (at least for Aries) where the work was done was significant. In addition, the fact that the teacher spoke across the room during the teacher's reading group is an indication that the teacher was concerned to see that students were doing what they were supposed to be doing in terms of their seatwork.

Not only was the teacher concerned to maintain order and have students on task with respect to their academic work, but also she carried this over to non-academic aspect of the social classroom setting, as the following illustration shows. On the morning of Tuesday, 5-29-84 the teacher began the day (after taking roll and seeing what lunch plans the students had) by 'doing the calendar.' She said: "Let's do the calendar. Today is . . . oh, today is Renee's birthday. I just remembered. Renee." Renee went up to the calendar. They 'did the calendar.' Then the teacher led the class in the pledge of allegiance. A few moments later the teacher asked who wanted to be helpers that week. Many students raised their hands. Jason asked something (which I didn't hear). The teacher said okay. Jason went over to the citizenship chart. As the teacher selected a student for a particular job (e.g., board washer), Jason checked the chart to see if that student received a good citizenship rating the previous week. (If not, then the student did not get to be a helper for the current week. This was the case for Vanessa on this day.)

Two features stand out in this vignette. First, as said before, the teacher's maintenance of order in the room went beyond the student's academic time and responsibilities. It also covered other social aspects of the setting. The teacher maintained order and control of community activities such as the selection of classroom helpers as well as when the calendar would be 'done' and by whom.

A second feature that stands out in this vignette is the significance of citizenship ratings in the make-up of classroom activities and communal status along with the subsequent significance of the citizenship chart. Quite clearly, one's past behavior (supposedly reflected by one's citizenship rating) bore directly on one's role and status in classroom activities during the following week (at least). These citizenship ratings took on great importance in the shaping of the events, and ultimately of the characters, in the classroom.

Citizenship Chart and Ratings

The vignette just cited points to the significance of the citizenship chart and the citizenship ratings with respect to the day-to-day activities and events in the classroom. From statements made by the teacher in interviews and in passing conversations, and subsequently from noting patterns shown on the charts (see appendix) as well as events such as portrayed in the vignette above, it became apparent that the citizenship chart and ratings were important in the social structure of the classroom.

Originally it seemed that citizenship ratings were a function of academic achievement. This was based on the fact that for the most part there seemed to be a clear correlation between academic achievement and citizenship ratings. It also was based on remarks by the teacher. For example, during an interview with her on 2-2-84, in the course of discussing individual students, the teacher commented that Barb received many bad citizenship ratings because "her work is never done." There was some evidence which was contrary to this original interpretation. For example, in that same interview the teacher remarked that Laurie received a bad citizenship rating because she was being a pest that week. As late in the year as 5-4-84 the data could be 'comfortably' interpreted within this original interpretation of the significance of citizenship ratings. At that time only two students had received more bad than good ratings, Juanita and Aries. Both were in the lowest reading group for second graders. Neither had passed any of the 'Big Math Combo' tests. Only three of the remaining fourteen second graders had not passed any of those tests. Of the twenty-eight spelling tests taken at that time, Aries had missed two or more words on eleven tests. Only three students had done worse and one of them, Antonio, was in first grade. Seven students (including Aries) had done worse than Juanita on the same criterion, while thirteen had done better. The evidence from these two 'worst' students seemed to corroborate the claim that good citizenship was a function of academic achievement. The other side of the coin, the 'best' students, also offered corroborating evidence. At that time, the 'best' students in terms of citizenship ratings were Jina and Carlos S. (both having received no bad ratings) and Laurie and Tom (each having received only one bad rating). (At that time Tavi had also received no bad ratings, but she was fairly new to the class.) Although Jina was in the lowest reading group, both Carlos S. and Laurie were in the highest. In addition, all three had completed their 'Big Math Combo' tests. In their spelling tests, Laurie had missed more than one word only once and had gotten perfect scores twenty-four times. Both Jina and Carlos S. had missed two or more words four times. Only five students (including Laurie) who had been in the classroom all year had done better, so Jina and Carlos S. were in the top half of the class in terms of spelling test. Tom, a first grader, was the only first grader who had passed any 'Big Math Combo' tests and had missed two or more words on a spelling test only twice out of nineteen tests.

In spite of all of this evidence apparently corroborating the assertion that citizenship ratings were a function of academic achievement, there was also disconfirming evidence. As mentioned above, Laurie received a bad rating one week because she had been a "pest." Likewise, Renee received her first bad rating in mid-March, and it was not because of poor work but because she, according to the teacher, kept interrupting the teacher. In addition, as noted already, Jina was in the lowest reading group. More poignant, however, were the cases of Jason and Ben. Both were among the 'best' students academically, yet both received numerous bad citizenship ratings. (By the end of the school year Jason had received fifteen bad ratings out of thirty, Ben fourteen of thirty.) As of 5-4-85 Jason had passed all of his 'Big Math Combo' tests and had missed two or more words on spelling tests only three times (while getting perfect scores twenty times). He was in the middle reading group. Ben, a first grader, was surpassed only by Tom in terms of 'Big Math Combo' tests passed. Additionally, Ben had perfect scores on fifteen of nineteen spelling tests, best among the first graders. This evidence all seemed to point to the belief that academic achievement was not the--or the only--criterion for good citizenship ratings.

Only after considering such apparently disconfirming data did it occur that perhaps the teacher used different criteria for evaluating different students in terms of citizenship. At the end of the year only Jina, Carlos S. and Tavi had received all good ratings, while Aries and Juanita were the only two students to have received more bad than good ratings. (As already mentioned, Jason received fifteen bad ratings, Ben fourteen, and Barbara also received fourteen bad ratings.) Rather than academic achievement as the determinant of citizenship ratings, it seemed that academic achievement was perhaps a determinant and more or less a determinant for different individual students. For example, Laurie's academic performance was always 'good' whereas Barbara's wasn't. If, as the last vignette described above might indicate, the citizenship ratings were used as a means of shaping classroom behavior, then it would not be effective (in terms of modifying behavior) for those students whose academic work was good to base ratings strictly--or even primarily--on academic performance. Laurie, for example, could not be disciplined by punishing her for bad work since her work was rarely bad. Rather, some other criterion (or criteria) was necessary to be able to reward and punish her. Good citizenship rewards and bad citizenship punishments, however, might be effective in getting Barb to do her work. Under this interpretation, the data could perhaps be coherently seen. If the purpose of the citizenship ratings was to modify behavior, by rewarding acceptable and desired behavior and punishing unacceptable and undesired behavior, then it makes sense that different criteria of citizenship ratings would be used for different students. Students whose behavior was acceptable academically needed to be evaluated in other ways (e.g., in terms of interrupting the teacher), while students whose behavior academically was not acceptable needed to be evaluated--at least more so--in terms of academic performance. Otherwise behavior could not be shaped. It makes sense, then, that Jason, while one of the top students in the class academically, received fifteen bad ratings, since he was often talking or looking around the room or even, on occasion, defying the teacher on the playground. Aries, on the other hand, was seen as one of the lowest students academically and much effort (in terms of ctiizenship ratings) was put into rewarding her good academic work and punishing her bad work (or lack of work).

Finally, the significance of the citizenship chart points to another issue that emerged from the interactions within the classroom and from the structuring (both conscious and unconscious) of these interactions by the teacher. The issue is that of the shaping of students' social and personal identities in the class.

A student's social identity in the classroom is determined in large part by the interaction of the student with the teacher, and, in effect, by the actions of the teacher (as well, of course, as with the other students). However, not only is the student's social identity determined in large part by these interactions, but also the student's personal identity is so determined. How the teacher interacts with the student is reflexively influenced by the ways in which the teacher makes sense of day-to-day activities and events, that is, by what the teacher sees and how (s)he comes to see what (s)he sees. Within this context, the construction of student identities had several features: (1) the construction of student identities was diachronic (i.e., they took shape over time and are understandable only with respect to the identities of other students, extra-curricular situations and the teacher's perceptions), (2) the construction of student identities was relational (i.e., understandable in terms of their behavior and interactions rather than as personality or innate characteristics), and (3) the construction of student identities was public (i.e., they took shape in such a way that the citizenship chart and other public, visible features of the classroom setting played an important part). All of these three features waxed and waned in saliency for the teacher across time and between students.

The vignette noted above (p. 31) concerning the citizenship chart illustrated how citizenship ratings took on great importance in the shaping of the events, and ultimately, in the shaping of the characters in the classroom. More importantly, they helped shape not only the social status and identity of students, but they also helped shape the personal identity of students. This was borne out most clearly in the case of Aries.

As mentioned earlier, Aries was one of only two students (out of twenty-four) to receive more 'bad' that 'good' citizenship ratings, receiving sixteen 'bad' ratings out of twenty-eight. She was seen as a particularly troublesome student and in the first twenty-three weeks of school she received fifteen of her sixteen 'bad' ratings. Besides citizenship ratings being a sign of Aries' 'trouble' status, the teacher's terms of reference with respect to her was another sign, as the following example suggests. On the afternoon of 2-23-84 the teacher and I were returning into the school building after having been outside with some of the students from the class (those students who had finished their work earlier), and we saw Aries sitting in the hall outside of the classroom. The teacher remarked to me: "Oh, I see Tallulah is out here." I said nothing. As we went into the classroom, the teacher's aide was sitting at her desk. The teacher commented: "I see Tallulah is out there." The aide replied: "I couldn't take it. She wouldn't listen, and she wouldn't be quiet when I told her." Several things stand out from this simple comment. First, the teacher's tone of voice and her use of the name 'Tallulah' both indicated sarcasm. The fact that she repeated the comment to the aide in the same way indicated that she consciously chose the terms and the manner of reference. The use of the name 'Tallulah' was, I took it, connected in some way with Tallulah Bankhead. This could have been intended as a reference to someone being an actress and perhaps that Tallulah Bankhead had somewhat of a reputation for playing 'hard-luck' women. Perhaps Aries was seen by the teacher as a 'hard-luck' girl or the teacher believed that Aries saw herself as a 'hard-luck' girl. In any case, Aries had been seen by the teacher as a 'bad' student. She was often mentioned as a source of exasperation, was often reprimanded in class, and was among the lower third of the students in terms of academic achievement.

Only two weeks later, on 3-6-84, an incident occurred which seemed to have an important impact on the interactions between the teacher and Aries, and subsequently on the shaping of Aries' identity both in social and personal senses. At the end of the school day, the teacher caught Aries taking a brownie from the teacher's desk. The teacher reprimanded Aries. The next morning the teacher and the aide both found letters on their desks from Aries. The letters said that Aries was sorry for taking the brownie, that she was bad and she didn't blame them for hating her. At the end of that school day, the teacher and Aries had a confidential talk.

Prior to this incident, Aries had received only four 'good' citizenship ratings and thirteen 'bad' ratings. After this incident Aries received eight 'good' ratings and only three 'bad' ones. In addition, on the last day of school the teacher awarded Aries not only a service award (for service to the class, e.g., for helping to clean the room), which five other students received, but also the Most Improved Student Award. The relative plethora of 'good' citizenship ratings and the special awards at the end of the year did not reflect improved academic performance; Aries did not receive a scholarship award, which six other students did. Academically, Aries was toward the bottom of the class. She was in the lowest level reading group throughout the year; only two other second graders had lower cumulative spelling test scores, and only two (the same two) had lower cumulative math test scores. When the teacher spoke about Aries, it was rarely in terms of academics, and the classroom interactions between them usually involved Aries' classroom behavior. In an interview at the end of the year, the teacher remarked that Aries had finally "shaped up and settled down."

(By contrast, Juanita, who was the other student to receive more 'bad' than 'good' citizenship ratings, was very rarely disruptive of classroom activities. The teacher and the aide both commented numerous times that Juanita "did nothing." Their complaint was not that she disturbed the classroom or other students, but that she simply didn't do her work. At the same time, her spelling test scores and math test scores were measurably better than Aries'. In fact, compared to the other students in the class, Juanita was in the middle of the range academically. While Aries' behavior changed over time along with accompanying citizenship ratings, neither Juanita's behavior nor her comparative citizenship ratings changed. She continued to receive 'bad' ratings, and while Aries received eight 'good' ratings in the final nine weeks of school, Juanita received only two.)

As will be discussed below, the teacher's goals were the meeting of district-mandated guidelines and deadlines and her use of behavior modification techniques were a means toward that end. The tools used by her, such as the citizenship chart, also helped shape student identity in diachronic, relational and public ways. Who Aries was, changed over the course of the year, in large part through her interactions with the teacher rather than from some innate 'personality' characteristics. Who she was, also was a function of public, observable and malleable qualities, indeed so public as to be correlated (at least in part) with a physical, observable object (the citizenship chart) located in the classroom.

Conclusion

Concluding Remarks

A classroom is, of course, a society in miniature, and it both reflects and absorbs much of the larger culture (or cultures) around it. No matter how diligent the education researcher is, the assimilation of the researcher into a particular classroom setting remains partial. The resulting interpretation by the researcher of the setting and the characters and the daily events must be taken cautiously and tentatively. The assertions made by the researcher, the conclusions drawn, the interpretations offered must, by their nature, be seen as hypotheses, not as facts. Their hypothetical quality, however, does not rob them of their importance or diminish their value. Though hypothetical, they may be reasonable hypotheses, internally consistent and clearly testable. The plausibility of alternative interpretations does not show the disvalue or simple-mindedness of any particular interpretation; rather it shows the enormous complexity of the setting and the characters.

In the present case, it was only after the school year was completed and while reviewing fieldwork notes, interviews and videotapes in detail that any overarching interpretation of the site emerged. From what were at first disjointed assertions and isolated observations, a coherent picture of the site slowly took shape and eventually crystallized under the overview of the wider constraints and demands of the local school district. That is, the teacher's perceptions and actions seemed to be oriented toward classroom management in the sense of the modification of behavior. This behavioral desideratum was primarily the maintenance of students 'on task' (academically). This desideratum was motivated by the intention of the teacher to conform to the mandates of the local school district, especially with respect to dated testing and lesson planning. Quite simply, the teacher tried for the most part to coordinate the classroom events and activities to meet the district time schedules.

Given this overview, the assertions presented above take on a sharper focus and can be seen as not so disjointed. The teacher was concerned to cover certain academic material at certain times in a certain sequence (all of which were mandated, in a sense, by the district), and she structured the daily routine as much as possible to meet this concern. This meant, for the teacher, that students should be on task until the task was completed. This was evidenced by her disapproval of students talking while supposedly doing seatwork. Not only was talking in the situations (i.e., during seatwork time) perceived as time not on task for those students talking, but it was also perceived as (at least, potentially) disruptive to other students who were on task, both at their seats and in reading groups. Hence, the teacher seemed to keep a close watch on activities throughout the room even while in her reading group. However, a possible result of this concern may well have been that peer teaching (a form of being on task) was not encouraged. Likewise, the use of space as an integral component in the shaping of behavior (by removing behavioral offenders) makes sense in this light. It also makes more sense why other uses of space (such as moving Juanita 'further into the room') were not emphasized. Juanita's behavior was not disruptive, it was merely unproductive. This was less threatening to the maintenance of other students on task than was Jason's verbal interactions with Jamie. (At least, this would make sense if Juanita's behavior was not perceived as being disruptive, while Jason's behavior was perceived as being disruptive.)

Under this rubric of 'behavior modification to get done what the district says must get done' the role of the citizenship ratings takes on fuller dimensions. The smooth running of the classroom can now be seen as an end, and acceptable behavior, shaped by citizenship ratings (with their accompanying rewards and punishments), can be seen as a means to this end.

Originally, the emphasis which the teacher placed on classroom management and behavior modification techniques to accomplish and ensure those management objectives were seen (by me) in a rather negative light. However, over time this somewhat harsh evaluation of the teacher and her approaches to the setting and characters changed. While she was the primary authority figure in the classroom and had some free reign over classroom events and activities, she was not in such a position with respect to the school district. The district mandated what material was to be covered and when students would be tested on that material. The choice of texts was not even in the teacher's control. While this does not absolve the teacher from moral or professional responsibilities, it does put into somewhat better perspective the different and varied constraints that were put on her and which in turn shaped her daily events and activities.

This interpretation of the research site and the teacher speaks to the initial guiding questions of the research project, particularly to the question: How do teachers come to see what they see and make sense of day-to-day events and activities? In this particular case, it seems much of what the teacher saw and the sense she made of what she saw was shaped by her concern for proper deportment in the classroom. Proper deportment in this case meant primarily non-disruptive behavior; that is, behavior which did not interfere with or interrupt the coverage of district-mandated material. What the teacher saw and what sense she made of the setting and the characters was (at least in large part) a function of her goals, academically speaking, for the class as a whole. Furthermore, while those goals were in one sense mandated for her, they were in another sense reflective of her own philosophy of teaching and of curriculum. The local school district determined for her what academic ends were to be attained (or, at least, sought), but her own conceptions and attitudes about teaching and curriculum determined the means to achieve those ends. To that extent, then, what she saw and how she made sense of it was influenced heavily by what she believed could and should be seen and what her purpose was in the classroom.

It was, in a sense, her cognitive and professional interests which shaped what she saw and how she made sense of what she saw.

Conceptual Overview

This paper began with a claim that there has been a return to 'Grand Theory' in the human sciences and that this is evidenced in the work of such thinkers as Foucault and Kuhn. In addition it was claimed that this present study is offered in the spirit of the thought of these two men, particularly the former. I now want to make a few comments suggesting that a Foucaultian interpretation of the assertions and conclusions made here is indeed a promising (i.e., coherent and fecund) one.

There are (at least) two ways in which to relate the present study with Foucault's insistence that knowledge and power are intertwined, especially at the institutional level: literally and metaphorically. Knowledge (as understanding) comes from socially constructed norms and rules which shape cognitive values such as legitimacy and propriety. Social concerns and actions--shaped, mediated and reflected by social institutions--determine the meanings of events and activities. Socially constructed norms and rules, however, are intimately connected with issues of power, as social institutions and those who run them strive not simply to exist but to survive and flourish. The literal sense in which this sort of Foucaultian theme is reflected in the present study has been indicated above: district-mandated guidelines and deadlines determined in large part the professional and cognitive goals of the teacher in this particular classroom. Her emphasis on classroom management was the result of felt pressures and constraints on what she had to cover academically in order to meet those guidelines and deadlines. Her use of behavior modification techniques (both explicit and implicit) were means to that end of securing proper classroom deportment, which itself would be conducive to meeting the mandates of the institution for which she worked. Her professional goals were institutionally structured and dictated to her in the form of such mundane objects as classroom readers and standardized tests. While her means toward meeting those goals were somewhat open, they can only be understood within the context of the institutional ends. As has been already stressed, those ends and her resultant means to attain them shaped the sort of classroom environment she sought and subsequently what sort of day-to-day events and activities in which she engaged and to which she attended.

Not only can the Foucaultian themes of knowledge and power be applied literally to this present study, but also they can be applied in a metaphorical way. That is, instead of focusing on society's institutions, such as the (district) educational hierarchy, one can look at this classroom itself as a society in miniature. Whereas the macroscopic view of this classroom yields a literal notion of knowledge and power, a microscopic view yields a metaphorical notion of knowledge and power. In such an interpretation, the representatives of power are no longer the school district, but the teacher and aide. As has been seen above, the goals of the teacher shaped much of the meaning and understanding of the classroom setting, both in terms of events and characters. Goals of proper classroom conduct, enforced by the teacher and aide, shaped student interactions and identity. Such "institutions" as classroom helpers were structured and dictated for the students by such mundane, public phenomena as the citizenship chart. The presence of the aide, allowing a division of labor, permitted a particular structuring of the classroom activities. For example, this division of labor allowed the teacher to more easily determine recess time (as well as who was rewarded with recess opportunities) and to more easily construct reading groups (by having, say, four reading groups instead of three). This, in turn, shaped the nature of teacher-student as well as student-student interactions.

A final word. The point of this sort of Foucaultian analysis and interpretation is to suggest that to understand the characters and events of this classroom, it is not instructive or illuminating to divorce day-to-day situations from a larger social context of meanings and understanding. For the educational researcher this means that an ethnographic approach is essential. Data concerning time on task, for instance, yield no facts without an encompassing, underlying theory within which to place them. This paper has been intended as an example of such an ethnographic approach and the accompanying analysis has been intended to suggest an underlying theory--or better, coherent interpretation.

Intellectual Autobiography

In the year that I worked on the research project and visited the research site, my research questions, my assumptions, my thinking, and even I myself changed. They changed in a variety of ways and for a variety of reasons. One significant reason for the changes in my questions and my assumptions was that my role and status with respect to the project and the other characters changed.

I joined an on-going IRT research project ("Teachers' Ways of Seeing," Frederick Erickson, coordinator) and because of this, the initial research questions with which I operated were given to me. The overarching question under which I initiated the study of the research site was: How do teachers make sense of everyday classroom events and how do they come to have this ability? In short, what do teachers see and how do they learn what and how to see? As corollaries to this initial question were the following, more specific questions: (1) How are teachers' ways of seeing learned and how do they change over time (both across years and within a given year)? (2) How can/does the larger social setting (e.g., inner-city versus suburban) affect what teachers come to notice and interpret in their classrooms? (3) How do teachers' emic perspectives differ from the researcher's etic perspective of the classroom characters and events? (4) How might practical ways of seeing vary between teachers (who are, more or less, instructionally effective in terms of student academic achievement outcomes)? From the beginning, I expected to address these questions in only a limited way, since I joined an on-going research project which involved several other researchers visiting a number of research sites. For example, since I restricted myself (except for very few exceptions) to one particular teacher and classroom, I could not investigate (at least at this level and stage of the project) how practical ways of seeing vary between teachers. It was also not clear to me at that time that I would (or wouldn't) be looking at how teachers' ways of seeing change over the course of years, since I did not know whether or not I would be visiting a research site for more than one academic year. (As it turned out, I visited only one site and only for one year.) However, given such restrictions, my initial days in the research project and at the site were explicitly guided by the above questions (to the extent that they were explicitly guided at all).

My joining an on-going research project meant not only that my initial guiding questions were given to me, but also that, in one sense, the details of my entry to the site had been attended to already (by Erickson). I first arrived at the site on the second day of school and first met the teacher whom I would be observing about a half-hour before the students arrived for school that morning. I was introduced by Frederick Erickson as "David Boersema." The teacher and I exchanged 'hellos' and both went about our work, she writing seatwork on the front board for her students, I setting up videotape equipment. My introduction to the teacher's aide was essentially the same. Shortly after the students arrived, the teacher introduced Frederick and me (me as "Mr. Boersema") and told the students that we would be in the room ("with us") this year observing and writing.

Although, as noted above, the details of my entry onto the research site had been attended to, in another sense, my entry and the establishing of my role as a participant-observer was (and remained) entirely under my own direction. Even though others had dealt with the red tape and the paperwork of my being allowed into the classroom, I still had the responsibility of establishing who I was to the teacher, the aide and the students, as well as negotiating what I would and could do.

In the ensuing nine months, my status and role with respect to the characters at the site (and subsequently my questions and assumptions) changed. At the beginning, I believe I was seen as Erickson's 'gopher' or a sort of mute video equipment technician Generally I spoke only to Frederick and spent almost all of my time on site taking notes or filming. Naturally, since Frederick had established all of the initial contacts, and seemed to order me around, he was the person with whom the teacher interacted. (My sense is that Frederick and I were on a par to the students, however; we were both men who came in with the camera.) Only after repeated occasions of going to the site alone did it seem that I was seen as a principle investigator, or at least as an independent entity, over and above Frederick's emissary.

While my initial role was almost exclusively that of an observer, over time it became somewhat more participatory. After a while the teacher and the aide came to initiate conversation with me, include me in jokes and asides, give me classroom dittos without prompting or requesting, and so on. Though I never saw myself as a confidant, the teacher became much more candid with me over time, even to the point of speaking to me of her personal medical and familial situations. The aide remained somewhat more distant from me, though she was certainly amiable and came to initiate more contact. To the students (or, at least, to most of them) my role became much more participatory than it was initially. At first very few spoke to me and when they did it was to ask what I was doing and why I was there. They looked at me from a distance quite frequently. They did not approach me and tended to walk past me at a bit of an accelerated pace. Over time this changed. They came to initiate a lot of conversation with me, joke with me, show me their work, occasionally ask me how to spell a word or what a word means, even touch me and draw pictures for me. I seemed clearly to have become a member of their community, even though they knew, in some sense, that I had a particular job to do and it was not the same as the teacher's or aide's. (A rather acute example of my participatory status to the students, in fact a rather peer status in their eyes, is the following. One day in January I was in the room with the students over a lunch hour. The teacher and aide were at lunch. The students were quite loud and rambunctious. Though I was in the room, their excitability was undiminished, or so it seemed to me. Meanwhile they were concerned that the teacher or the vice-principal might arrive at any moment.)

As I became less a stranger and aloof researcher to the teacher, the aide and the students, their increasing acceptance of me affected my position within the classroom community and hence the questions which I posed when looking at and reflecting on the characters and events there. My more participatory role allowed me access to information and relationships, which consequently affected the sorts of questions I asked. For example, knowing more about the family situations of certain students and knowing how the teacher spoke of those situations, I was able to ask how the teacher's relationship with a given student was shaped by this knowledge. Or, when the teacher told me that a particular student had been accepted into a school for the gifted (and another student was not accepted), I had (I believe) some more understanding of why she treated the former student differently than she did others (say, with respect to the student's work in class). This, in turn, led to asking new questions about the teacher's perceptions of the student (and of other students).

Another feature that affected the change in questions was the simple fact of my continuity of time spent on site. That is, the simple fact that I was there fairly regularly for nine months raised (the opportunity for) new questions. I no longer simply asked: What's going on here? I could also ask: How have things changed here?

Having learned, through interviews, conversations and inferences from observations, certain things about the characters and the setting of the research site, I came to know (which I didn't at the beginning of the year) which students seemed to be the 'better' or 'worse' students (academically). I learned that (and to some extent why) the teacher used behavior modification techniques (such as treats for good behavior) in the classroom. This, in turn, led to the asking of new questions, say, about the teacher's commitment to such techniques and her conceptions of who and what these students are.

Having been at the site over an extended period of time, I found my questions change in the sense that I often went to the site with specific things to which I planned to attend. For example, on a given day I might decide to concentrate my attention on the teacher's aide or on specific students or on modes of address used by the teacher or on areas of the room, and so on. That is, I began to go to the site with some specific features which I wanted to emphasize on a given visit. In this sense my questions changed over time because I focused more on different aspects of the site than I had earlier. My questions and observations became more particularized to the primary characters at the site. My questions became more crystallized with respect to the people and the setting as I came to know them. The sorts of questions I asked changed from the initial guiding questions of the research project to the following example: What is the significance of the aide? How does she affect/determine the social setting? To what extent and in what ways does her perspective of classroom characters and events differ from the teacher's and what difference does this make? Another question--more directly involving the teacher--was: Why does she respond differently to (what seemed to me) similar actions or events? For example, why does she ignore one student who falls out of her seat but apparently get angry at another student who falls out of her seat? Or, why does one student get good citizenship marks and another student get bad citizenship marks when (to me) their behavior seems quite similar?

Other questions became more directed toward the students: what social groups exist (and on what criteria)? What sex and race roles seem to be perceived by the students? What social status is granted or earned by students who seem to be academically superior or inferior?

These questions, while different than my original guiding questions, were pertinent to the latter in the following sense: these questions were more closely focused on the social structure of the classroom and its effects on the teacher (and what she sees) than vice versa. These questions did also focus on the contrary, that is on how what the teacher saw affected the social structure of the classroom, but the immediate focus of my visits became more concerned with how the classroom structured what she saw rather than the reverse.

The change in questions and foci noted above came about in large part because of my change in status and role at the research site. However, changes also came from other sources. For example, at the same time as I was doing the field research, I was enrolled in a seminar in research on teaching. Among the issues and questions discussed in this course, and which led to my further thinking about teaching research, was the question: Who is the teacher? In reflecting on this question and possible answers to it, the notion of students as teacher(s) grew in me. That is, I came to think of students as sometimes being in the role of teacher (either to the class as a whole or to another particular student or even to 'the' teacher). This led to my thinking of classroom identities (both social and personal) as being relational in a fundamental sense. The notion of peer teaching became an issue which I wanted to investigate at the research site under the rubric of the following question: Does the teacher encourage (or discourage) peer teaching, and, if so, in what ways? Additional questions sprung from this. For example, which students, if any, appear to be peer teachers, why and for which other students? Also, to what extent does peer teaching shape the social structure in the classroom, or is the social structure shaped by it? These became issues of importance to me, which I had not at all conceived of earlier in the process of my research.

Besides this question of peer teaching, other issues and questions involving my research project arose from this seminar in the research on teaching. For example, from discussions on the use and role of metaphors in research and in teaching, I thought more explicitly on the sorts of metaphors used by the teacher at the research site. This thinking on metaphors, coupled with my interest in issues in the philosophy of language, particularly conceptions and theories of reference, led me to more carefully attend to the question of what terms of address and reference were used by the teacher, the aide and the students at the research site.

My changing status in the classroom and my participation in the above mentioned seminar in research on teaching affected my thinking about my research project and the questions which I asked. Those, however, were not the only sources of changes in my thinking. Another source was my reflection upon the research project, research in general and education in general. Much of my reflection was inspired by the readings from the course, making me aware through specific cases of things to look for and pitfalls to avoid. In addition to the course reading, my thinking was affected by further personal reading in the areas of anthropology (e.g., Geertz' The Interpretation of Culture), phenomenology (e.g., Guignon's Heidegger and the Problem of Knowledge) and the philosophy of science, particularly of the social sciences (e.g., Fay's Social Theory and Political Practice and Bernstein's The Reshaping of Social and Political Theory). These works did not so much change specific questions which I asked concerning the research site but aided me in thinking about field research in general and the subtle ways in which moral and political issues are played out in mundane situations such as a second-grade classroom.

A further source of changes in questions and interpretation concerning the research site was the discussion at the American Educational Research Association (AERA) symposium on this research project. In particular, one audience member noted that more attention could be paid to the social context within which schooling takes place and the social mandating (both explicit and implicit) that underlies the structures in which the characters at the research site find themselves and that underlies the day-to-day events that occur. This prompted me to review the sorts of questions I was asking about the characters and events at the research site and to ponder further the nature of the research project in general as well as research in education in general. For example, I considered more the implications of the social constructivist position from which I had argued in my AERA paper.

I was led to review the assertions I had made earlier, such as the claim that the teacher did not encourage peer teaching. Looking again at the commitments of social constructivism led me to change my question from 'Does the teacher encourage peer teaching?' to 'What sort of model(s) of teaching does the teacher implement?'

Reflection on the significance of social constructivism also led, for me, to a renewed attention to the works of hermeneutic theorists, such as Foucault, Derrida and Gadamer. Further consideration of their views shaped the foci and 'final' version of this paper.

Of course, all of the changes noted here did not indicate or imply that there was no continuity over time with respect to the issues addressed or the questions asked. Even though my immediate concerns grew to include peer teaching, the status and role of the aide, the significance of the citizenship ratings, the relevance to the teacher of student home lives, and so on, my overarching questions continued to be those centered on what the teacher saw in the classroom, how she saw what she saw and the interplay between her perceptions and the social interactions in the classroom. I came to think of my change in foci not so much as a change, but rather a growth. By coming to see new and different issues and facets of the site and the people there, my original guiding questions grew to include the more specific questions which I later asked. In this way, in this asking of these new and more focused questions, I came to get a clearer understanding of not only the research site, but also of what my original guiding questions were all about.

APPENDICES

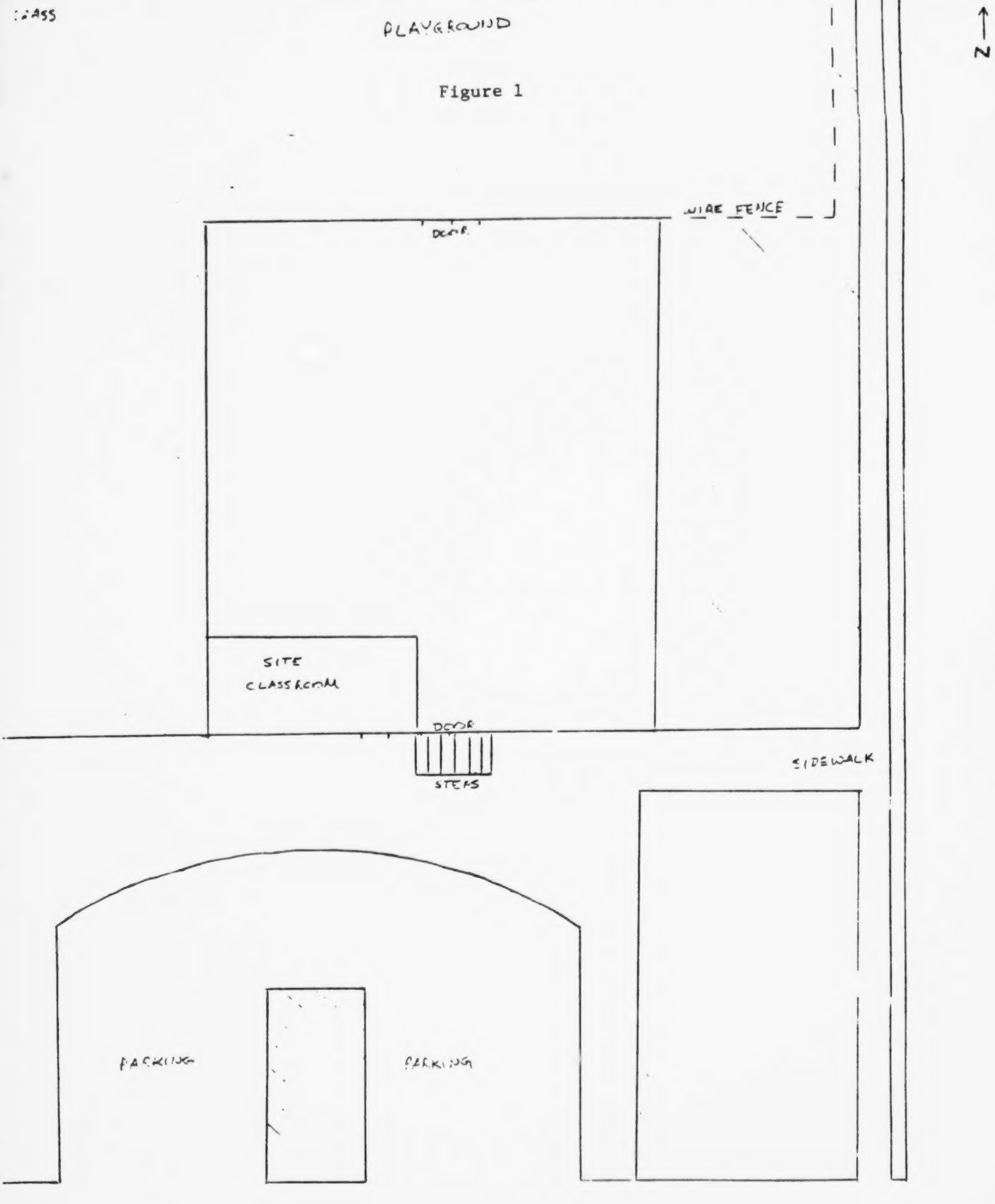
GRASS
PLAYGROUND
N
WIRE FENCE
DOOR
SITE
CLASSROOM
DOOR
STEPS
SIDEWALK
PARKING
PARKING

Figure 1

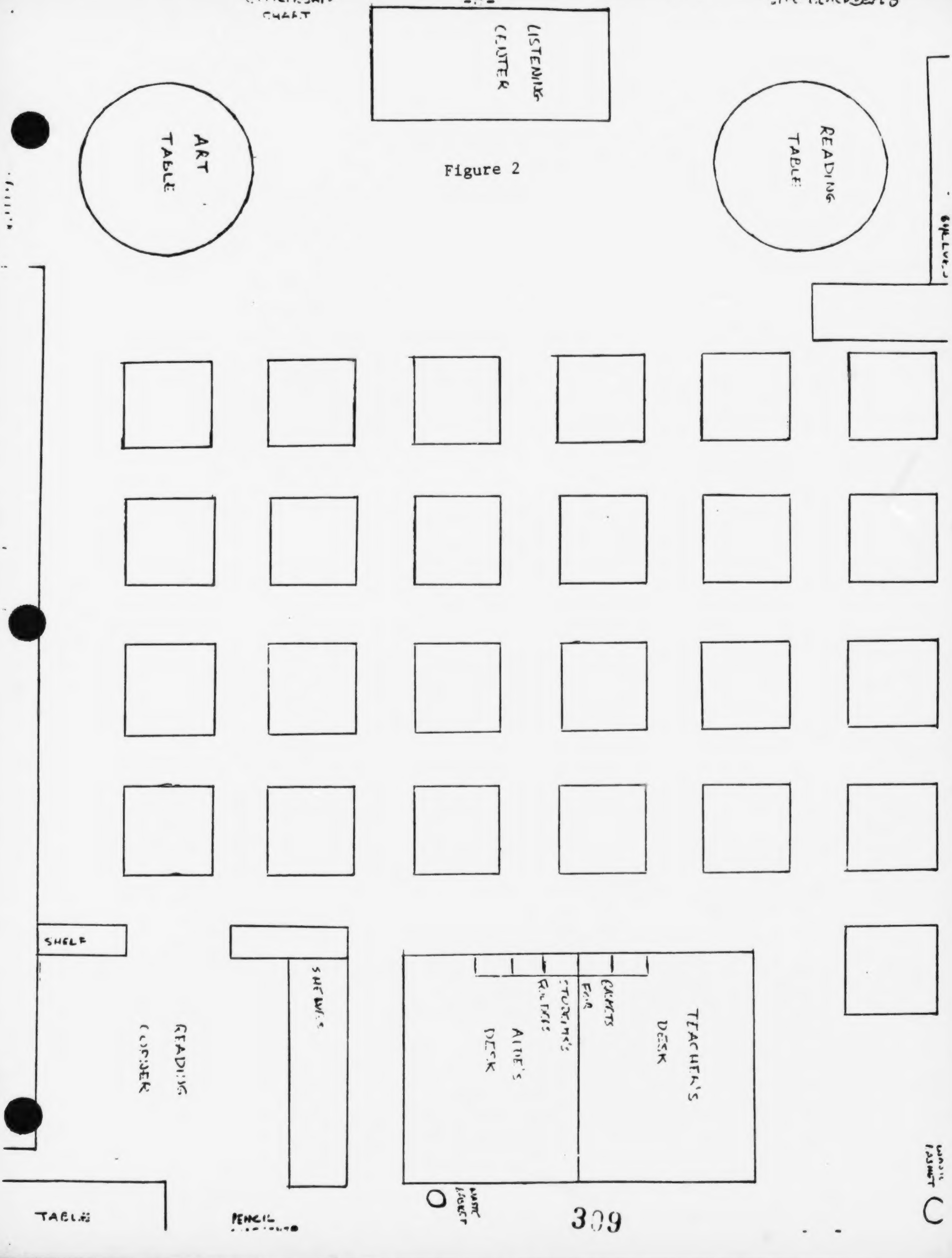
CITIZENSHIP CHART
SIDE BLACKBOARD
LISTENING CENTER
ART TABLE
READING TABLE
SHELVES
SHELF
SHELVES
READING CORNER
STUDENT'S FOLDERS
AIDE'S DESK
EXHIBITS FOR
TEACHER'S DESK
WASTE BASKET
WASH BASIN
TABLES
PENCIL SHARPENER

Figure 2

Tables 1 & 2

	BIG MATH COMBOS													SECRET NUMBERS												
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	★	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	★
Laurie	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★
Jina	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★						
Vanessa	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★																
Juanita	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★													
Aries	★	★																								
Joel	★	★																								
Renee	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★
Jamie	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★														
Gabriel	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★
Jason	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★		
Rickey	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★													
Carlos M.	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★											
Barb																										
Carlos S.	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★						
John																										
Josie	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★														
Rocky	★	★	★																							
Tom	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★													
Miles	★	★	★																							
Tavi																										
Antonio																										
Ben																										

Before advancing to the "Big Math Combos" tests, all students had to pass ten "Addition Facts" tests and eighteen "Subtraction Facts" tests. At the end of the school year only Barb (among the second graders) had not completed these. (She passed all of the "Addition Facts" tests and eleven of the "Subtraction Facts" tests.) All first graders passed all "Addition Facts" tests except Gladys, who passed five, and Miles, who passed seven. First graders who did not pass all of the "Subtraction Facts" tests were: Ben (seventeen), Tavi (ten), Gladys (five). The following students had passed all "Addition Facts" tests and some "Subtraction Facts" tests (as noted) when they moved: Marcy (six), John (eight), Damaris (five), Jerome (five). After passing all of the "Secret Numbers" tests, Laurie, Renee and Gabriel each passed five "Times" tests. (Scott and Sam are not included - by me - on this chart, because they were in the room for such a short time.)

Table 3

STAR SPELLERS

	9-16	9-23	9-30	10-7	10-14	10-21	10-28	11-4	11-11	11-23	12-2	12-9	12-16	1-6	1-13	1-20	1-30	2-3	2-10	2-17	2-24	3-2	3-9	3-23	3-30	4-13	4-19	5-4	5-11	5-21	5-25	6-4	6-8	*/<-2
Marcy	*	-1	*	*	-1	-1	-1	-1	-3	*	-1	*	-3	X	X																			5/2
Laurie	*	*	-1	*	-2	*	*	*	*	*	-1	*	-1	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	-1	*	*	*	28/0
Jina	*	*	*	*	*	-3	-2	*	*	-1	*	-2	-1	*	*	*	*	*	*	-1	-1	*	-2	*	*	-1	*	*	*	-2	-1	-1	*	21/1
Vanessa	*	-1	*	-1		-2	*	-1	*	*	-1	-4	-1	*	*	*	-1	-1	*	-2	*	*	-4	*	*	-2	*	*	*	*	-3	*	*	19/2
Juanita	*	-1	-1	*	*	-2	*	*	-2	*	*	-1	-1	ab	-4	-3	-1	*	*	-1	*	-1	-2	*	*	-2	-1	*	-1	*	*	-1	*	14/2
Aries	*	*	-1	-1	-3	-7	*	*	-1	-3	-3	-3	-2	-2	-3	-2	-1	-4	*	-1	-1	ab	-1	*	*	-8	-1	*	-1	-1	-1	-2	-1	8/8
Joel	*	-7	*	-3	*	-4	-5	-1	-3	-1	-1	-4	-1	-3	*	-1	-2	-11	*	-5	*	*	-5	*	*	-2	-1	*	*	-2	-1	-1	-3	11/11
Renee	*	*	-1	*	*	-2	-2	*	*	-1	-1	-1	-1	*	-1	*	-2	-1	-1	*	*	*	*	*	*	-1	*	*	-1	*	-1	*	-1	18/0
Gabriel	-1	*	-2	*	-1	*	*	*	-1	*	-1	*	*	*	*	*	-1	ab	*	-1	ab	ab			*			-1		ab		*		14/0
Jason	*	-1	*	*	*	-1	*	*	-3	*	-1	*	-1	*	-2	*	-2	-1	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	-1	*	-1	*	*	23/1
Jamie	*	-2	-4	-3	-2	-1	*	*	*	-2	-2	*	-3	-1	*	*	-1	-3	-2	-1	-1	-2	*	*	*	-2	-1	-1	ab	-2	-1	*	*	12/4
Rickey	*	*	-1	*	-1	-3	*	ab	-2	*	-2	-1	-1	*	-2	-2	-2	-4	-3	*	-2	-1	-2	*	*	-1	*	*	*	-2	-1	*	-1	13/3
Carlos N.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	-2	*	-2	-1	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	-1	ab	*	*	*	*	-1	-1	*	*	-2	-3	-2	*	23/1
Carlos S.	ab		-1	*	-1	-2	*	*	-1	*	*	-1	*	*	-2	-1	-1	-2	-1	*	-1	-1	*	*	*	-3	*	*	-1	*	*	*	-1	16/1
Barb	*	*	*	-1	-1	-3	*	*	-2	-1	-3	-4	-5	*	-1	-1	-4	-3	-3	-3	-1	-1	-2	ab	*	-5	*	-4	-6	-3	-2	-2	-3	8/13
John	*	-12	-2	*	-1	-12	*	*	ab	-2	-1	-1		-1	ab	-1	-4	-3	-1	*	*	*	ab	X	X									7/4
Josie	-1	*	-1	*	-1	-4	*	*	*	-3	ab	-2	-5	-2	ab	ab	ab	ab	-2	ab	*	-1	-1	*	-2		*	*	-2	*	-1	*	-3	10/4
Lamaris										*	*	-1	*	*	X	X	X	X																4/0
Thomas										*	-1	*	-2	*	*	*	ab	-3	*	-1	*	*	*	*	*	*	-1	*	*	-2	*	*	*	17/1
Niki										*	-1	-1	-2	X	X	X	X	X																1/0
Ben										*	*	*	-3	*	-2	*	-2	-3	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	-1	19/2
Antonio										*	*	-1	-5	-2	-5	3	-2	-5	ab	-3	-4	-5	-4	-2	-2	ab	-2	-5	*	-4	-3	-2	-5	3/12
Miles										*	*	-1	*	-1	*	*	*	-2	*	*	*	-1	*	*	*	*	-2	*	*	*	*	*	-2	18/0
Rocky															-1	ab		-7	*	*	ab	ab		*	*	-5	-2	-1	-3	-3	-1	-4	*	4/5
Tavi																	-7	-3	*	ab	*	*	*	*	*	*	-2	*	ab	*	*	-1	-4	9/3
Jerome																									*	*	-1							2/0
Scott																												-1	-1	-4	-4	-2	-4	0/3
Sam																												-7	-1	-8	-8			0/3
Gladys																													-3	-2	-5	-8	-4	0/5
*/<-2	14/0	9/2	7/1	12/2	6/1	3/7	13/1	13/0	6/3	15/2	7/2	7/4	5/6	13/1	9/3	11/2	4/3	4/11	14/2	8/3	13/1	10/1	10/3	17/0	17/0	7/4	10/0	15/3	10/3	9/0	3/0	12/2	9/3	

Table 4

GOOD CITIZEN

* - great citizen!
□ - shape up!

	9-16	9-23	10-7	10-14	10-21	10-28	11-3	11-11	11-23	12-2	12-9	1-7	1-13	1-20	2-3	2-10	2-17	2-24	3-2	3-9	3-16	3-23	3-30	4-6	4-13	5-4	5-11	5-18	5-25	6-1	6-8	*/□
Tom	*	□	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	ab	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	□	*	*	[illegible]
Antonio	*	*	*	*	*	□	□	□	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	ab	*	*	□	*	□	□	□	□	*	*	□	□	□	*	□	18/12
Miles	*	□	*	*	□	□	□	*	*	*	□	*	□	*	*	*	*	□	*	*	*	□	□	*	*	*	*	□	*	*	*	21/10
Lamaris	*	□	*	*	*	*	□	*	*	*	*	*	–																			10/2
Roxanne	*																															1/0
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Marcy	*	*	*	*	*	*	□	*	*	□	□	–	–																			8/3
Laurie	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	□	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	□	*	*	[illegible]
Jina	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	31/0
Vanessa	*	*	*	*	*	*	□	*	*	*	□	*	*	□	*	□	□	□	*	*	□	*	*	*	*	*	*	□	□	□	*	[illegible]
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Aries	□	*	□	□	□	*	*		□	□	□	*	□	□		□	□	□		□	□	□	*	*	*	*	□	*	*	*	*	[illegible]
Joel	□	□	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	□	□	□	*	*	*	*	□	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	□	*	*	*	*	[illegible]
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Gabriel	□	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	□	*	*	*	*	*	*	□	*	*	□	*	*	*	*	□	□	*	□	*	[illegible]
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Jamie	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	□	*	□	□	□	□	□	□	*	ab	□	□	*	□	[illegible]
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Jerome																					*	*	*	□	*							[illegible]
Gladys																							*	*	*	*	□	*	*	AB	*	[illegible]
Sam																										*	□	□	*	–		[illegible]
Scott																										*	*	AB	□	*	*	[illegible]
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Chapter 4

CASE STUDY OF MRS. GATES:
THE FORMATION OF ONE TEACHER'S
PEDAGOGICAL COMMITTMENT

This case study considers how one experienced second-grade teacher's ways of seeing were influenced by her own working philosophy, the strategic character of the practical setting, and the school setting in which she worked. The chapter begins with an introduction to the setting and participants. Next, in the section on descriptions and interpretations, assertions and evidence are offered which explore the range of elements which shaped the teacher's ways of seeing. The chapter ends with a summary and conclusions.

Becky Wendling Kirschner

CASE STUDY OF MRS. GATES:

THE FORMATION OF ONE TEACHER'S PEDAGOGICAL COMMITTMENT

Introduction

Just as learning is a complex process constituted by various cognitive and social factors, teaching is also a complex process. Contributing to this complexity are the diverse environments of the classroom--teachers, students, curriculum, textbooks, and local, state, and federal policies. Experienced teachers learn to distinguish between the elements of the context to which they must attend and those they can ignore. This comes with years of experience. Beginning teachers are frequently overwhelmed by the demands placed on them and are unable to distinguish between important and unimportant elements of the context. Thus, one purpose of teacher education is to prepare preservice teachers to "see" what is important in the classroom and to distinguish it from what is "noise." In order to do this, teacher educators must learn more about the ways that experienced teachers "see." One way to learn more about how teacher develop the ability to distinguish between "noise" and what is important is to probe the "mind's eye" of experienced teachers.

The research project of which I became a part had as its aim to discover how different teachers of early grades learn to observe and make practical sense out of what happens in their classrooms from day to day. Four issues were of special interest: (1) how teachers' ways of seeing are learned and how they change over time (across years of experience in teaching and within each year from September through June), (2) how what teachers come to notice and interpret in their classrooms may differ as a result of their experience in teaching in inner-city or in suburban schools, (3) how teachers' adaptively practical capacity for "seeing from within the action" as the leader of classroom life may differ from the more distanced observation patterns of intermittent visitors to classrooms, and (4) how practical ways of seeing may vary among teachers, making them more or less instructionally effective in terms of academic achievement outcomes.

My study was conducted from January to June of the school year. It built on and progressed simultaneously with the work of another researcher. He had worked with the teacher, Mrs. Gates, the previous year and during the first semester and shared his insights about the setting with me. In addition, he aided my entry into the site by introducing me to the teacher and explaining to her that I was engaging in the same type of research that he was doing. Because Mrs. Gates had been working with a participant observer in her classroom, she quickly accepted my presence and began to share her ways of seeing her classroom with me. She had become reflective about her practices; she was familiar with the kinds of questions fieldworkers ask and anticipated many of mine before I asked them. As a result, I benefited from the previous work done by the experienced researcher and from the relationship he had established with the teacher. Also, I was able to check my developing assumptions against those of a researcher who had been in the site for a longer period of time.

Due to the abbreviated nature of my study, I built upon the discoveries the project had made until that time and focused on looking at reading instruction to discover how the teacher's practical way of seeing it had developed. In the previous years of the study, the researchers had learned that teachers' ways of seeing are contextually embedded. Teachers are radically "local" (situation-specific) in their contextual embeddedness. This suggested that elements within the context might teach teachers what to notice and what to regard as "noise." Beginning with these assumptions, I sought to discover the elements in the context in which the teacher functioned that had taught her her practical ways of seeing.

My guiding questions were: (1) What happens in this setting to promote the acquisition of literacy? (2) How does the teacher define literacy? (3) How did she come to define it in this way? (4) Have elements of the context taught her what to teach, when to teach it, and how to teach it? (5) Do the elements in the context that influence what, when, and how the teacher teaches remain constant or do they change over time?

Setting

The study was conducted in a second-grade classroom in an urban elementary school located in a mid-sized city. The school was located in one of the city's oldest residential neighborhoods. Homes surrounding the school varied in style, size, and state of repair. Scattered among the modest two-story frame homes were many of the three-story custom houses that had been home to many of the city's most prominent citizens in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Their leaded glass windows, wide porches, turrets, and decorative wood trim suggested the former grandeur of the neighborhood.

But despite these signs of affluence, it was clear that the neighborhood had changed. A "For Sale" sign in front of one three-story frame house indicated that it had been converted to a three family home. Many of the large and smaller homes were in various stages of disrepair. Broken steps, bare lawns, peeling paint, patched roofs all suggested that the neighborhood had declined. However, there were also signs that the neighborhood was rebuilding. Many homes had been renovated or were in the process of renovation. During the course of the study, two homes across the street from the school were rebuilt inside and out.

The efforts of a strong neighborhood association appeared to be behind the efforts to revitalize this area of the city. During the course of the study, the school district made a preliminary decision to close the school. However, the neighborhood association was able to persuade the district to reconsider their decision, and the school remained open the following year. As part of their argument that the school should be kept open, the association stressed that the school played a major role in the efforts to revitalize the neighborhood. They pointed out that the school was a focal point of the neighborhood. This indeed appeared to be true. Parents worked as volunteers in teachers' rooms, held bake sales, and conducted after-school activities, such as movies, for the students and for the neighborhood. When I asked Mrs. Gates if she was concerned about the possible closing, she replied that she was not. "I'm not worried about that. Andy and Betty's moms will see to it that the school stays open."

Like the neighborhood, the school building showed signs of its former grandeur and recent decline. The red brick exterior, decorative carved stone around the front door, the cupola, and the glassed conservatory at the rear of the school all signaled that this had been a school that suited the once grand neighborhood. Inside there was decorative molding and carved ceilings in the halls and throughout the school. The principal's office had French doors, wood paneling, and Windsor chairs all reinforcing the sense of custom design. According to Mrs. Gates who had seen a film that had been made in the 30's when the school opened, the district had considered the school a showplace. Generally, the school was in good repair. However, there were many signs of wear. The marble steps leading from the first to the second floor were worn down by hard use.

Mrs. Gates' room showed even more signs of wear. By modern suburban schools standards, it was drab. Located at the back of the north wing of the school building, it was rectangular, approximately 30 by 15 feet, and had a high ceiling of at least 10 to 12 feet (See map, Appendix A). The walls were painted a drab institutional green. The door from the hallway into the room was located on the south wall. One of the two longer walls, the south wall, was two-thirds covered by a bulletin board and chalkboard. The wall space farthest from the door was used to display students' artwork.

The west wall contained a closet and wooden cabinets. The bottom cabinets had wooden doors while those on top had glass doors. The teacher used the closet and cabinets to store supplies, and the students frequently secured them for her despite the difficulty they had opening the old hardware designed for adult dexterity.

Eight large windows that reached from above the radiators to the ceiling covered the north wall of the room. There were more chalkboards and bulletin boards on the east wall. The floors were bare hardwood, worn smooth by years of use. In some places the boards were uneven, causing desks placed on them to rock slightly.

Student desks with attached seats were arranged in the middle of the room. These varied in size and in style. The large wooden desks of the teacher and the aide were placed perpendicular to the north wall. A file cabinet, two round tables with child-sized chairs, two rectangular tables, and a bookscase completed the classroom furnishings.

Despite the drab physical appearance of the room, the teacher had added personal touches that gave it an overall feeling of warmth and life. She had pulled the window shades down over the top half of the windows and decorated them with posters and cutouts relating to subject matter. For example, one set of posters illustrated the metric system. The area above the chalkboard on the south wall was also used to display posters. Some dealt with social skills--"Don't talk when someone else is talking"--and with study skills--"Find a quiet place to study." More colorful posters covered the bulletin board by the door on the west wall. There was even a poster on the side of the file cabinet. It said, "Each of us is important," and showed a picture of four children, white, black, Asian, and Hispanic, standing in line to get a drink from a drinking fountain.

Samples of student artwork were displayed throughout the room, adding more color and interest. Like the posters, the artwork was changed regularly. Free standing lambs decorated the windowsills for several weeks. The corner between the closet and the south wall was decorated with larger pieces of artwork. One time there were colored geometric designs; another time there were pictures of families. Next to this area on the south wall, the teacher had placed a large poster titled "Personality of the Week." On the poster she placed a picture of one of the students, which she had taken with a Polaroid camera. The student of the week added whatever else he or she wanted to share about himself or herself with the class such as other photographs, pictures cut out of magazines, or drawings.

Like the decor, the atmosphere in the classroom was warm and inviting. The teacher, Mrs. Gates, was a black woman in her mid-thirties. She was married to an engineer, and they had three children, a son, 12, and twins, 6. The family lived in an upper-middle-class neighborhood in a suburb of the city in which the school was located. Mrs. Gates had grown up in Virginia in a small, closely-knit family; she had one brother. She had graduated from a college in Virginia and was completing a Master's degree at the near-by university.

Mrs. Gates was committed to her students and to the school. During one of our discussions, she said that she had considered teaching part-time while her children were young but that she had rejected the idea because it would have meant transferring to a different school. She said, "I like this school. The parents like me. I like the kids." This comment was especially interesting in light of the district-wide perception that this was one of the least desirable schools in which to teach.

Mrs. Gates also showed her dedication to the students in her willingness to do "extras" for them. She arranged field trips to places she knew that their parents could not or would not take them. At one point, she organized a trip to a local science museum. Because she knew that most of her students could not afford to pay the usual entry fee, she negotiated with the museum to get a discount. When she was told that the district could not provide transportation for the students because of budget cuts, she wrote a letter to the local transit authority and secured passes for free transportation on a city bus. On other occasions, she and the class walked to places of interest in the area. Mrs. Gates enlisted parent-helpers who accompanied her and her class to places such as the state capitol, the historical museum, the community college, and even to a local mall where a mural the class had created for "Women in History" week was on display.

In addition to the teacher, the class had a full-time aide, as did all classrooms in the building. These aides were paid by federal funds because the socio-economic level of the students and their test scores in reading and math were so low. The aide was a white woman in her early thirties, who had several children in the school. Under the teacher's supervision, she instructed two reading groups and one math group. Despite the differences in style--the teacher rarely raised her voice or called out students' names to reprimand them and the aide did both frequently--the teacher and the aide seemed to work well together.

The student population varied from 25 to 28 students during the course of the study and was mixed racially and ethnically. (See Appendix B for the students' names, racal or ethnic affiliation, and reading group.) The Asian students participated in a district bilingual program that was housed in the school. The Hispanic students participated in a similar program. According to the teacher, nearly all of the children came from poor families and the majority read below grade level. All but ten of the students participated in the supplemental reading program conducted by the reading resource teacher. The teacher explained that the range in ability made it necessary to have five reading groups in her classroom. One student was in the top group, fifteen were in the bottom group.

The school population was quite unstable, as was the population in the teacher's classroom. The school experienced a turnover rate of nearly 60%. During the course of this study, two boys and two girls moved and left the teacher's room. One girl and two boys moved into the classroom. The teacher also mentioned that four or five other students had left her classroom during the earlier part of the year.

The school district in which this school was located had a strong central administration, and the teachers were given a great deal of guidance in what to teach, how to allocate time, and how to teach. (See the guidelines, Weekly Time Allocation and Language Arts/Reading Objectives, Appendix B.) In addition to these guidelines, the district had selected a basal reading series which was used throughout the district. The series came with a teacher's guide, skill charts, and tests to evaluate student progress. The district had made its primary goal the improvement of student test scores in reading and math on the Michigan Educational Achievement Profiles (MEAP) tests. All teachers were made aware of the areas tested by these measures and the district's objectives for reading and math were correlated to the MEAP objectives.

Description and Interpretation

Early in the Teacher's Practical Ways of Seeing Project, patterns emerged that revealed that experienced teachers see their classrooms in a comprehensive and "local" manner. Teachers' ways of seeing are, therefore, contextually-embedded. I assumed that, to better understand how teachers come to see their classrooms, it would be useful to discover how teachers construct the context. What elements of the context capture teachers' attention? Do teachers attend to the same elements from minute-to-minute, day-to-day, year-to-year, or do various elements compete for teachers' attention? Do elements in the context influence what, when and how teachers instruct their students?

It was clear from earlier research that the context was complex. The teachers' own beliefs, experiences, educational background, the students in the classroom, textbooks, and district, state and federal policies all appeared to be factors that contributed to the complexity with which the teacher dealt. I decided to focus on instruction and to look at what the teacher taught, when she taught it, and how she taught to discover how elements in the context had influenced how she had learned to see. My guiding questions were: (1) What happens in this setting to promote the acquisition of literacy? (2) How does the teacher define literacy? (3) How did she come to define it in this way? (4) Have elements of the context taught her what to teach, when to teach it, and how to teach it? (5) Do the elements in the context that influence what, when, and how the teacher teaches remain constant or do they change over time? (6) Are some elements given more weight than others? Are the elements which influence her ways of seeing constant in the setting or do they vary?

To address these questions, I became a participant observer in a second-grade classroom in an inner-city school. I observed the class nine times for at least three hours each time over a period of four months. On all but one occasion, I observed the class on a Wednesday afternoon from 12:00 to 3:00. On the other occasion, I observed the class on a Tuesday morning. As a participant observer, I took fieldnotes on the activities occurring in the classroom. I also engaged in informal discussions with the teacher during class and after school. On one occasion, I conducted a more formal interview with the teacher after school. In addition to these exchanges, the teacher and I talked at length on the phone seven times during the course of the classroom observations. After the observation period, while I was writing my report, I talked with the teacher on the phone and in person. At the end of the school year, she and I discussed her perceptions of the school year, her hopes and concerns for the students as they moved into different classrooms, her interactions with parents at the final parent/teacher conference, and which students she had decided to retain. Mrs. Gates also read a preliminary draft of my final report, and we discussed her reactions to it before I wrote the final draft.

In addition to interacting with the teacher and observing the classroom, I examined the basal reading series used in the classroom and the district and the teachers' guides that accompanied the series. I read the introductory material that came with the basal to discover the reading philosophy underlying the series and to understand how the publisher suggested the series be used. I analyzed two reading lessons in greater detail and compared what I found with the language arts guidelines on reading that the district gave the teacher. I also compared it with what happened during the reading lessons that I had observed. In addition, I spoke with the aide and with most of the students in the classroom and with one parent who assisted the teacher in managing a home-based reading program.

Besides looking at what happened on the cognitive level of instruction, I also looked for patterns of social interaction between the teacher and the students across the setting and during reading activities. I assumed that the participants would signal meaning to each other and that this would also help me understand what elements of the context influenced what the teacher saw, and how what she saw influenced the way she chose to teach reading. I looked at what she said about her students and how she interacted with them in reading groups and in other instructional areas such as math. I looked at how she arranged time in class, how she moved from one activity to another, how she used time in instructional areas.

From my observations and conversations with the teacher, I made the assertion that Mrs. Gates was confronted by a broad spectrum of factors and concerns which influenced how she saw her classroom. Many of these factors and concerns came from sources outside of the teacher and outside of her control. These outside factors and concerns interacted with her own beliefs and influenced what she chose to teach and how she chose to teach it. To test my assertions, I looked for discrepant cases and checked my emerging assumptions against those of the other researchers. I also discussed it with the teacher.

The following assertions, underlined for emphasis, grew out of analysis of my fieldnotes, notes on conversations with the teacher, discussions with the other researcher, comments the teacher made on my first draft, and the reading of literature that made me see the setting and my assertions in new light.

The teacher's way of seeing what to teach in math had been influenced by her concern about meeting the district's goal to raise students' math scores on standardized tests.

Early in my observations, it became clear that the teacher was concerned with meeting the district's goal to raise student test scores in math and that this concern on her part did influence, to some degree, what she elected to teach. During my first observation (1/18), the students finished their work five minutes before dismissal time. The teacher asked, "Who wants to earn extra points?" Students responded by raising their hands, wriggling them in the air high above their heads, and saying, "Me. Me!" The teacher said, "All right, who can write 90 is greater than 26?" A student went to the board and wrote 90 > 26. The teacher said, "Right! Who wants to go for ten points?" Another student went to the board to write a second problem.

After class, Mrs. Gates explained that the students had been playing to obtain extra recess minutes. She said that she kept the math objectives in mind and used activities such as the one we had seen to fill in between other activities. By using time in this manner, she said that she hoped to reinforce the basic math skills that students were expected to develop.

During my next observation (1/25) Mrs. Gates once again showed that she was concerned about meeting the district's goals. This time her concern was with reading.

> While the students were working on their seatwork assignments, I joined the teacher at her reading table and began to look at the basal readers stacked in the middle of the table. In a voice that suggested to me that she was still not certain that I was an impartial observer, she said, "I just wanted to point out to you that I have six reading levels in

> this room. Some of the children are reading at kindergarten level!" I commented that having six reading levels in one room must be difficult for her. Nodding, she looked down at the table and in a quiet voice she said, as much to herself as to me, "They just don't understand what we have to deal with." Looking up, she continued in a more forceful voice, "They get on us for MEAP scores." Her voice became even more forceful, and she exclaimed, "But this school has a sixty percent turnover!" She frowned and shook her head. I asked how the school had performed generally on the tests. In a soft voice, with eyebrows raised, she said, "Wellll, we did . . . okay" . . . (her voice trailed off). She looked around the classroom at her students and continued, "They aren't getting on us yet." (Fieldnotes, 1/25/84).

From the tone of her voice and the way she had directed her gaze, I sensed that by "us" she was referring to her students and to herself and that she was concerned with meeting the goal to raise test scores which "they" (the district) had set for her.

To confirm or disprove this assumption, I analyzed what occurred during math and reading to discover how the district goal to raise test scores might influence how Mrs. Gates' decision on what and how to instruct the children. I found that in at least one math lesson, her choice was based on how students were expected to perform on math tests.

> The teacher announced to the class, "We had a BIG . . . PROBLEM! Some of us are having trouble counting money. Go to the board . . . Jeff and Terri. How many pennies in a nickel?" Jeff and Terri wrote their answers on the board. Jeff wrote "5" and Terri wrote "10." "How many think Terri's answer is correct?" A few students raised their hands but lowered them when they noticed that the others had not. "How many think that Jeff is correct?" Hands shot up as the students looked around to see if others were raising their hands. "Right! Jeff, can you explain your answer?"
>
> Jeff responded, "It takes five pennies to make one nickel."
>
> Mrs. Gates smiled and said, "That is right. It takes five pennies to make one nickel." The lesson proceeded in this manner: 1) Children went to the board, 2) the teacher gave them a problem, 3) they wrote their answers, 4) the students voted when the answers were different, and 5) the students with the correct answer explained his or her answer.

> While the third set of students was at the board writing their answers, Mrs. Gates explained to the class, "I just got the results back from a test you took." The tone of her voice suggested that she was explaining to the students why they were engaged in the activity. Later she said, "Listen carefully. I have a really tricky question for the students at the board. Nia, Malcomb, listen carefully. A quarter is worth how many nickles?" Malcomb wrote "5"; Nia wrote "4." "Which answer is correct? I changed the question around. I said it the way it was worded on the test!" The students decided that Malcomb was correct, and he explained his answer. (Fieldnotes, 2/15/84).

This incident showed that the teacher was not only concerned that the students learn the concept being taught but also that she wanted to make certain that the students could demonstrate this knowledge on tests. She explained to me that it was not enough for the students to know the concepts. It was important for them to become familiar with the way questions were asked on tests so that they could show what they knew. She said, "These tests ask tricky questions like 'a quarter is worth how many cents more than a dime?' Children have to be prepared to answer those kinds of questions."

Her comment suggested that her way of seeing what students needed to learn in math was influenced by what the tests asked students to do. Not only was she concerned with teaching students money counting skills, she was also concerned with teaching them how to take the math tests so that they would be able to demonstrate their knowledge. Her concern about meeting the district goal to raise test scores influenced what she taught and how she instructed students in this math lesson. A similar pattern emerged in reading instruction.

The teacher's way of seeing what to focus on in reading instruction was influenced by the district's language arts objectives and the district's goal to raise students' reading scores on standardized tests.

On several occasions, I noted that the teacher asked students to recall the sequence in which things occurred in what they read or on a record they listened to. The following vignette illustrates this phenomena.

> Mrs. Gates was interacting with her Sunshine group as they worked on pages in the workbook that accompanied their basal reader. She asked, "Who can read the sentences in the right order? Which comes first? Second? Third?" One student answered quietly and I could not hear his answer. But in response, the teacher drew back in her chair in mock surprise, her eyes wide, her eyebrows raised, a smile on her face, "Frog found his hat before he lost it?!"
>
> The students responded in unison, shaking their heads and laughing, "Nooooo." One of the students volunteered, "Frog looked for his hat."
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> The teacher smiled and said nodding her head, "Right! Things have to make sense. Do you get up, go to bed and then come to school?"
>
> The students responded shaking their heads, smiles on their faces, "Nooooo."
>
> The teacher continued. "Things have to go in a certain order. How many of you go to the park, pack a lunch, and then play?"
>
> The children picked up on the absurdity of her statement. Laughing they answered, "Nooooo."
>
> The teacher laughed with them. "Right. You would pack a lunch, go to the park and then play. That is what they are saying here. Things have to make sense. They have to come in order." (Fieldnotes, 1/24/84).

This concept of sequencing was reinforced when the whole class listened to story records on two other days.

> The teacher introduced a record and storybook. The student who had brought the book and record to class sat in front of

> the class with the book in his hands held high so that all the students could see the cover. The teacher stood beside the record player ready to play the record and said, "The title of the book is Let Papa Sleep. What do you think the book is about?" Several students responded to her question drawing on their own experiences to predict what the book might be about. One boy told a story about a father trying to sleep who was awakened by a baby crying. To get the other children to make predictions, the teacher said, "Have you ever made noise when someone at your house wanted to sleep?" Most of the children nodded.

After the teacher had played the record, the children clapped. The teacher encouraged them to clap by saying, "Let's clap for the book and the record." Then she said, "Let's talk about the book. What happened first in the story? Remember, we always talk about what happened first." The students proceeded to retell the story in this manner. (Fieldnotes, 1/18/84).

On 1/25 a similar discussion was held after story records were played. The first was about a number of animals. The teacher asked the students to recall the order in which they appeared in the record. Then she replayed the record to let them check their answers. Next, she played a second record, Rumpelstiltskin, and asked, "What happened first? Remember, we always talk about that things come in order."

The pattern of reading instruction that emerged in these three lessons, suggested that Mrs. Gates considered sequencing an important concept. Reflecting on what she had said about her awareness of math objectives and the importance of preparing students for tests, I assumed that sequencing was one of the district's language arts objectives and that it might also be a concept on which students were tested.

To test my assumption, I examined the district's language arts/reading objectives for first grade. I discovered that sequencing was a concept described under the reading objectives.

I. Reading
    A. Comprehension
        1. Literal
            b. "Read to note the sequence of events and answer questions about order."

In addition, the sequencing objective was marked with an asterisk to indicate that it correlated with concepts that were tested on the MEAP test.

I inferred from this observation that the teacher was as familiar with the language arts/reading objectives as she was with the district's math objectives. Just as the district's math objectives and the MEAP tests had influenced her ways of seeing math instruction, the district's language arts/reading objectives and the MEAP tests had influenced Mrs. Gates' way of seeing in regards to language arts/reading instruction. From the pattern that emerged in the three language arts lessons, it appeared that the district objectives had influenced what she chose to teach and what she chose to emphasize. To further test my assumption that the teacher's way of seeing in regards to instruction were influenced by the district's objectives and by the district's goal to improve students' test scores, I decided to look more closely at what happened during reading instruction to determine how pervasive this influence might be over time and lessons.

The teacher's way of defining reading and her way of seeing when to teach it were influenced by the district language arts/reading objectives and the district guidelines on how much instructional time to allocate for each subject each week.

I observed that Mrs. Gates followed a regular schedule and was consciencious about sticking to it. On the Wednesday afternoons I visited, her schedule was as follows:

12:10 to 12:25.	Silent reading.
12:25 to 12:35.	Reading to the class. Each day two students read three pages to the class from a book that they selected.
12:35 to 1:00.	Math.
1:00 to 1:45.	Reading groups and seatwork. During this time, students who were in the supplemental reading program or in bilingual programs left the classroom for part of the time.
1:45 to 2:00.	Gym.
2:00 to 2:10.	Bathroom and drink break.
2:10 to 2:50.	Language arts, social studies, science. Record time (1/18, 1/25, 2/1, 4/4). Art project for social studies (2/8, 4/18). Social studies. The teacher read a book about Martin Luther King, Jr. (2/15). Language arts. The students read and acted out a legend (2/22).
2:50 to 3:00.	Dismissal.

Mrs. Gates seemed to be concerned about staying on schedule. Time appeared to dictate movement from one content area to another. She looked at the clock frequently as she moved through the lessons and made transitions from one context area to another at approximately the same time each day. In fact, her comments to her students reflected her awareness of time. "Time for silent reading." "Time for math." "Time for gym in five minutes."

During a reading group lesson with the Towers, she looked from the teachers' guide to the children's faces and said, "We are supposed to read the story." She looked up at the clock. The smile on her face vanished. She shook her head and said, "But it is getting late! I don't think we can fit it all in" (3/8). On another occasion, Mrs. Gates explained to the Towers that they had to end their lesson. "I have to work with the Sunshine group now before their reading teacher comes to get them." Just as she said that, the door opened and the reading teacher appeared. With a note of distress in her voice and a frown on her face, Mrs. Gates said, "Oh, no. It is too late. We took longer than I thought." She made similar comments about time as she moved the students from one content area to another. At the end of a math lesson on 2/1 she said, "Time for reading. I need my Sunshines at the reading table." To herself she said, "That lesson took longer than I thought; we are behind."

I assumed that the teacher had established her own schedule and that things such as the availability of the aide or the scheduling of the resource teachers had influenced what she taught at what times. To test these assumptions, I asked her if the pullout programs made teaching difficult because they took children out of the room. She said that she had scheduled both programs at the same time in the day to overcome problems of that type. When I asked about her aide, Mrs. Gates explained that there were six reading groups in the room and that the aide was supposed to work with the low achievers. "But," she added, "it would be too discouraging to always work with them. I take a group of low achievers myself. After all, this is my classroom and I'll organize it as I want!" These comments suggested that the district objectives did not seem to have a major influence on how she scheduled her time.

I made similar assumptions about how Mrs. Gates taught reading. I knew that she was concerned about meeting the district objectives and that she kept them in mind as she planned instruction, but I assumed that, while she kept these objectives in mind, she relied on her interpretation of the objectives to guide instruction. I thought that she would consider silent reading, reading to the class, and listening to records as reading activities. I assumed that I could look at what happened during these activities to learn more about how her own definition of reading might influence what she selected to teach during reading and how she delivered instruction. However, on 2/22, an incident occurred that made me question these assumptions.

On 2/22, after gym at about 2:10, Mrs. Gates introduced an activity that I would have considered reading. However, her concern about the amount of time she spent on the activity and her comments to me after it made me realize that something other than her own preferences influenced the way she scheduled class time and what she selected to teach. Her comments suggested that her scheduling had been influenced by the district time allocation guidelines and that her definition of reading, her way of seeing what should be taught during reading, and her way of seeing how to teach had all been influenced--at least in part--by the objectives given to her by the district.

At about 2:10, Mrs. Gates walked to the blackboard on the south wall and said, "We've got to do a couple of things in a few minutes. I don't see everyone's eyes." When the students had all turned their attention to her, she asked, "Who knows what a legend or a folklore is?" Malcolm responded, "It's old." Andy said, "A story that happened a long time ago." Other students added comments. Then the teacher asked three girls from the Tower reading group to read the legend she had given to them as seatwork. After Barb read the title "The Talking Yam" the teacher stopped her. "Who knows what a yam is?" The students shook their heads and shrugged their shoulders. The teacher prodded them. "They grow in the ________." "Garden" some students answered. "Ground" others said. The teacher repeated, "Ground." She then asked, "Can you visualize a field of yams?" The students nodded. "OK, let's read. If we have time we will act it out."

After the girls finished reading the legend, the teacher asked the students to retell the story in their own words. "What happened first? Second? Third?" Then she asked who would like to act out the story. All of the children responded by raising their hands. Some jumped out of their seats and jumped up and down beside their desks, faces glowing with smiles. The teacher looked up at the clock, sighed, and asked, "Who would like to be the farmer? Jerry?" As she read the story, she asked Jerry to act the way the words said that the farmer would act. At one point in the story, the farmer's dog spoke to him. Jerry stood still to think how he should act. The teacher said, "How would you act if someone spoke to you? No one was there except an animal." Jerry ran to the other side of the room showing mocked fright on his face. The teacher said, "No. The words don't say he ran. They say he was surprised!" In this manner the students took turns playing parts and acting out the legend. From time to time the teacher would remind them to listen to the words and to do what they said. "Don't say it, act it out." Every child had an opportunity to take part. Many acted out the parts at their seats as they listened.

At 2:44 the teacher turned to look at the clock. The smile vanished from her face. Like the children, she had been caught up in the activity, laughing with them and acting out parts, but the clock seemed to pull her back to some reality. With a worried expression, a frown on her face, she said partly to herself but in a voice loud enough for me to hear at the table where I sat by the windows, "We really went over on that." Her voice was flat and she looked troubled. She quieted the students, "One, two, heads down," and then led a discussion about the activity they had just engaged in. "We could put on a play for the school," one student suggested. After a few minutes of this discussion, the teacher asked the students to do their jobs--wash the board, dust, pick up--and get ready to go home.

> As she walked by the reading table where I was sitting, she repeated to me what she had said while she was in front of the room, "We really went over on that." (Fieldnotes, 2/22/84).

I was puzzled. Why was she so concerned about the time she had spent in what appeared to be a reading activity? After all, she had done many of the same things during reading group instruction. She had taught vocabulary (yam). She had asked students to relate this new experience to their background knowledge (What is a legend?). And, she had encouraged them to think of the meaning of words. She had even used the experience to reinforce the concept of sequencing, a reading objective and a skill tested on the MEAP test.

After class she said, "I really wish we had more time to do these kinds of things. It is so good for them." I said, "Well, it could be considered reading." She smiled and looked at me, a twinkle in her eye, "Wellllllll . . . (more slowly) it . . . could . . . be." (She was obviously reflecting on what I had said.) The smile left her face and her voice became flat. In a matter-of-fact tone she said, "But they wouldn't think so."

I was confused. Mrs. Gate's actions and comments suggested that something other than her own ideas influenced how she defined reading and how she allocated time for each content area. I assumed that they, in this case, were the same they she had referred to when she had voiced her concerns about preparing students to take and succeed on tests. Once again, I decided to look at the district language arts/reading guidelines to see how they might account for Mrs. Gate's statement that they wouldn't consider the legend activity reading. I hoped that by understanding how they defined reading, I could learn how the district objectives had taught Mrs. Gate's to define it and how this definition had influenced what and how she taught.

As I had noted earlier when I had looked at the language arts/reading objectives, they were divided into six areas: 1) Reading; 2) Literature and Media; 3) Composition; 4) Grammar and Language; 5) Speaking and Listening; 6) Spelling, Punctuation, Penmanship, and Usage. A number of objectives were listed under each heading and under each objective were lists of activities that could be used to meet them.

Folk literature, which I assumed included legends, came under 2) Literature and Media. Objective A, under this heading was: "Introduce different forms of literature from a variety of nations and cultures." The legend "The Talking Yam" had been identified to the students as an African legend. Objective B was: "Practice activities which enhance literature." Number 3 under this objective listed "Role playing, dramatics and puppetry" as activities that could be used to meet the objective. The children had dramatized the legend and had played the roles of the characters. The lesson had introduced the children to a new form of literature, a legend, which had come from a different culture, Africa.

This explained why the Mrs. Gates had said that they wouldn't consider the legend activity reading. They would consider it a literature activity. It appeared that Mrs. Gates interpreted the district language arts/reading objectives literally, and this influenced how she saw the various activities which I had thought were different aspects of reading. But the objectives did not explain why she had been so concerned about the time she had spent on the legend. I decided to explore how she went about scheduling instruction to learn exactly which activities she would define as reading. I assumed that this would make it possible for me to identify which elements influenced her practical ways of seeing how and what to teach during reading instruction.

During my next observation, I asked Mrs. Gates if she followed a specific schedule each day. She responded, "Oh, yes. They give us guidelines on how to divide our time. I'll give you a copy." She handed me a copy of her time allocation schedule. At the top, there was a grid which she had filled in. On the left-hand side, she had placed a time next to each grid and across the top she had indicated the days of the week. In the grids she had written the content areas. In the grids for the afternoon (the time I visited the class), she had listed: 12:10 to 1:10, reading; 1:00 to 2:00 on Tuesday and Thursday, art; 2:00 to 2:20, physical education; 2:20 to 2:40 on Monday and Tuesday, science, on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, social studies; 2:40 to 3:00, planning. Under the grid, there was a typed guideline. It read, "Weekly Time Allotment"--Reading, 600 minutes; Penmanship and Spelling, 150 minutes; Literature and Language, 120 minutes; Math, 200 minutes, and Planning, 100 minutes.

While the schedule I had observed on Wednesday afternoons had varied from Mrs. Gates' public schedule--teachers filed a copy of their schedule with their principals--I noted that the schedule I had observed corresponded with the number of minutes of instruction per day which the weekly time allotment prescribed. Mrs.

Gates' did provide two hours of reading instruction per day from 9:10 to 10:10 in the morning and from 12:10 to 1:10 in the afternoon. During those times, the students participated in reading groups, engaged in silent reading, and took turns reading to the class. Thinking back to her comments about the legend activity not being considered reading, I realized that Mrs. Gates defined silent reading, reading to the class, and reading groups as "reading" and that she defined the legend activity as "literature and language." That explained why she had been concerned that the class had spent so much time on the legend. The class had used more than the 14 minutes alloted per day for literature, and they had not had time to engage in their social studies lesson.

These discoveries regarding Mrs. Gates' decisions about when to teach reading and what to define as reading suggested that her way of seeing had, indeed, been influenced by the district goal to increase students' test scores, the district objectives in math and language arts/reading objectives and the district time allotment charts she was supposed to follow. In the area of reading, the objectives under reading and the time allotment guidelines influenced what she defined as reading instruction. It appeared that district guidelines, in the form of objectives and time allotment charts, had led Mrs. Gates to define reading instruction as only that instruction that occurred in reading groups. I assumed that by looking at what happened in her reading groups activity she officially considered "reading--I would be able to learn how district guidelines influenced her instruction.

The teacher's ways of seeing her students' cognitive needs lead to differential instruction in her low achievement and high achievement reading groups.

As noted earlier, there were six reading groups in Mrs. Gates' classroom. She worked with three of these groups, Spinners, Towers, and one of the Sunshine groups. The instruction that she gave the Sunshines was very different from the instruction that she gave the Towers. The Sunshines' instruction focused on low level decoding skills while the Towers instruction focused on higher order comprehension skills. The instruction of the Sunshines and the Towers on February first illustrates the difference.

> At 1:00, while helping a child with math, Mrs. Gates stopped to make an assignment to the whole class. "Let me see your eyes. We have a new rhyming word puzzle today." She had explained to the students how to complete the assignment. She looked at the clock. It was 1:00. She said, "That took longer than I thought! Quickly, I need my Sunshines." She moved from the board to the reading table nearest her desk, picked up the teacher's guide for the Sunshine reader, opened it to the page marked by a slip of paper, and began to read as she sank slowly into the larger chair, her back to the windows and face to the class. The children in the Sunshine group, collected their reading materials and joined her at the table. In a distracted tone--she still had her eyes on the teacher's guide--she said to the first child to join her, "We have to get the other students. We are behind time." Without saying a word, the child put his book on the table, walked across the room to the door, opened it and left. Laura, Kim, Terri, and Annie had joined the teacher by this time. They sat quietly waiting for the teacher to give them her attention. Her eyes were still on the teacher's guide on her lap. When Josh had returned with Martin and Nancy from the other second-grade classroom, the teacher looked up and said, "We are on page 47." The students started to leaf through their books looking for the page. The teacher looked around the table to see who had found the page. Her face was expressionless--unusual for her. She repeated, "Page 47." Her voice was flat but quiet and patient. In a few seconds she repeated in a voice that was less patient, "Page 47." Some students were still leafing through their books. "Page 47 . . . .

page 47 . . . . page 47 . . . . page 47." Each time she repeated the page number her voice was less patient. While she spoke more emphatically than before, her face was still expressionless. Finally all of the students found the page. They looked up at her and she leaned forward to check each book to see if, in fact, the students were all on page 47.

"Laura, will you please read the title?" The teacher's eyes were again on the teacher's guide. She did not look at Laura when she spoke to her. Laura read the title, "Jerry's . . . Im . . por . . . tant . . . Things." The teacher, reading from the teacher's guide, asked, "Why do you think they have an apostrophe there? Jerry's?" She did not point to the apostrophe or even look up from the teacher's guide. The students did not respond. She looked up and said, "Jerry . . . apostrophe . . . s." Still there was no response. Reading from the teacher's guide, "This mark is used to tell you that something belongs to Jerry." Then, looking up she said, "Laura, will you please read?" Laura read very quietly. As she read, the aide sitting at her desk talked quietly to the teacher. The teacher leaned toward the aide and away from the children. From time to time, the teacher stopped listening to the aide and corrected Laura's errors. At one point she turned her attention back to Laura and said, "Sound it out." Laura tried but was still unable to pronounce the word. "Who can help Laura sound out the word?" Kim raised her hand, smiled and pronounced the word. She had a big smile on her face and looked at the teacher as she said the word. The teacher was looking at the teacher's guide and did not respond to Kim's smile. Laura finished the section she was reading, let the book drop from the upright position she had held it in and looked up. The teacher, looking at her with a blank expression asked, "Laura, are you studying your vocabulary words?" Laura did not respond verbally but looked down at her book. Although the teacher's face was blank, there was a measure of rebuke in her voice.

"Nancy." Nancy read next. She also had some difficulty. Once, when she was stuck on a word, the teacher said in a supportive tone, "Maybe if you start over you will do better." Nancy went back to the beginning of the sentence and read it again. "That is not 'John,'" the teacher corrected. Nancy corrected herself and read, "Jerry."

When Nancy had finished reading her section, the teacher asked the students at the table, "What did Jerry's mother ask him?" Annie answered her question quietly. "Good, you were listening. Martin?" Martin read quietly. He stumbled over many of the words. Laura whispered words to him as the teacher kept her eyes on the teacher's guide in her lap. "Laura," she said looking up, "Let him read please, Laura. Let him read." The next time Martin could not read a word, Laura did not help him. Josh looked at the teacher with a big smile on his face, "Can I give him a clue?" The teacher

> nodded. Josh voiced the sound of the first letter in the word. Martin read the word. Josh beamed up at the teacher. She did not respond; her eyes were on the guide.
>
> Terri was the next student to read. When she could not read a word, she sounded it out letter by letter. The teacher looked up from her guide, a smile on her face, a tone of approval in her voice. "Terri, you are really picking up the skills to sound out words!" Terri wiggled in her seat and smiled back at the teacher. She looked down at the book, a smile still on her face.
>
> Kim was the next reader. She read her section without any problems. A few times she slowed down to sound out a word but generally she read in a smooth flow. When she had finished, the teacher looked up smiling approval. "Verrrrry gooood! You have im. . .proved! Have you been studying at home?" Kim nodded, a shy smile on her face. She drew herself up in her chair. "Verrrrry goooood! I can tell my children who study at home." As she said this she looked around the table at the other students. Those who had had a problem reading looked down at their books and did not meet her eyes. Kim and Terri smiled back at her. (Fieldnotes, 2/1/84).

Each of the other students read a section of the story. When they had finished the story, the teacher told them that they could return to their seats. She did not discuss the story with them but did assign a page in their reading workbook. The children collected their books quietly and returned to their seats. Next, she called the Towers to the reading table.

> "Towers," the teacher called out. She located the teacher's guide from a pile of books on the reading table, opened it to the page marked with a slip of paper, and placed it in her lap. She skimmed the lesson quickly turning the pages rapidly. Barb, Betty, Annie and Andy stood up beside their desks and collected their reading material.
>
> The "Towers" joined the teacher at the reading table, chattering excitedly about the story they were about to read. The teacher looked up from the teacher's guide, a broad smile on her face, her eyes dancing. "I know what the story is about," Betty said smiling as she dropped into a chair beside the teacher. "I already read it," Betty added triumphantly, her eyes twinkled with mischief. The teacher leaned toward her as she said this and they smiled into each other's faces. Looking around the table, the teacher asked if the others knew what the story was about too. Barb, Annie, and Andy

shook their heads indicating that they did not know. The teacher suggested that they look at the pictures on the first page of the story and at the title to get an idea.

After a few predictions by the others, Betty told them, "It is about a man who collected so much string he had to make a kite to get rid of it!" The teacher smiled at Betty again and with a smile on her face and in her voice she asked, "Have you ever collected things?" Hands shot up. "My dad and I collect rocks. I have a whole egg carton full of them at home!" Andy said drawing himself up out of his chair with his excitement. The others took turns describing their collections in great detail. The teacher listened to each child intently, leaning toward the child as he or she spoke, smiling and asking questions.

Looking down at the teacher's guide again she asked, "What do you call a person who collects things?" The children looked puzzled; their eyes wandered upward as they searched their minds for the word. The teacher waited patiently. "A collector!" Andy said triumphantly. The teacher and the students laughed together and the teacher nodded approval of Andy's answer. "Betty, will you start?" the teacher asked looking at Betty.

As Betty read from her book, the teacher followed along in the teacher's guide on her lap. She interrupted Betty, "Wait a minute. We have to look at the word 'beaches'. Remember the rule? Words that end in 'ch'? How do we make them plural?" The students answered without hesitation. "OK, go on." Once again she looked down at the teacher's guide.

Betty continued reading. The teacher stopped her at the end of the page by saying, "Very good reading." They made eye contact and smiled. "Barb?" Barb read the next section with a great deal of expression in her voice. The teacher nodded and smiled approvingly at her when she finished. "Annie?" Annie read more quietly but did not pause or show that she was having any problems. Finally, Andy read. At one point, he said "cried it home." The teacher looked up as did the other children but before anyone could say anything, Andy corrected himself, "carried it home." The teacher nodded to herself as she followed along in the guide. When Andy had finished, the teacher looked up at the students and began asking a series of questions.

"Why is the ball getting bigger?" Annie answered quietly, "He is adding more string." The teacher smiled and looked down at the guide and back up at the children. With a note of questioning in her voice she asked, "If you were Mr. Fergus, how would you solve the problem?" Adding with a smile on her face and with emphasis that served to build suspense, "He has a M . . . . . A . . JOR PROBLEM!" Andy

> looked at the teacher with a thoughtful expression and said, "I would give the string away." The teacher looked skeptical. "How many of you have gotten collections from other people?" Betty answered that she had and explained what it was. Barb also said that she had gotten a collection from a friend of her mother's. The teacher listened and nodded as if to suggest that Andy's answer might be more acceptable than she had thought. "Let's see how he solved his MAJOR . . . MAJOR problem."
>
> Following the same pattern of turn taking as they had before, the students finished reading the story. The teacher did not interrupt to ask questions or make comments. When they had finished she said, "You read very well. You are turning into good readers!" She sounded pleased and had a big smile on her face. "Now, let's see what you remember." Reading from the teacher's guide she asked a series of questions that required the students to use reasoning and to make inferences to answer. "Why did he collect string?" "Do you think he would have collected buttons if he had found a button first?" "What if Mr. Fergus had kept collecting string?" The students responded to these questions thoughtfully. Several times they laughed as they recalled parts of the story. They chattered about the story and the teacher joined them. Finally, after a few minutes, the teacher asked them to return to their seats. (Fieldnotes, 2/1/84).

These vignettes illustrate how differently Mrs. Gates instructed the Sunshines and the Towers. In the lower group, the Sunshines, she focused on low-order-decoding skills. She asked students to read passages of the story aloud. When they were unable to read a word, she asked them to use phonetic skills to "sound it out." When Laura could not read a word, Mrs. Gates said, "Sound it out. Who can help Linda sound out the word?" After Terri had read, Mrs. Gates said, "Terri, you are really picking up the skills to sound out words!" She also praised Kim's reading after she had sounded out words and read the vocabulary words with ease. "Verrry good! You have im . . . proved! Have you been studying at home?" When Kim nodded her head, Mrs. Gates replied, "I can tell my children who study at home."

The comment suggested that unlike Laura who had not responded when Mrs. Gates asked her if she had been studying her vocabulary words at home, Kim had been. Mrs. Gates' response illustrates the instructional focus she used with her Sunshines. It suggests that she focused instruction on phonetic skills and on mastering vocabulary with the Sunshine group because she felt that this would make them better readers. In contrast, Mrs. Gates focused on higher-order comprehension skills while instructing the Towers. Before they read a story she asked them questions that called up background knowledge that would help them comprehend the story--"Have you ever collected things?" As the children moved through the story, Mrs. Gates asked them questions about what they had just read--"Why is the ball getting bigger?" She also asked them to predict what would happen in the story--"If you were Mr. Fergus, how would you solve the problem?" The Towers were also asked to make inferences about what had happened in the story - "Do you think he would have collected buttons if he had found a button first?" "What if Mr. Fergus had kept collecting string?" This focus on higher order comprehension skills suggests that Mrs. Gates focused on comprehension skills to improve the Towers reading.

Looking back over my fieldnotes, I found that the patterns that had emerged in these two lessons were present in the other lessons as well. While Mrs. Gates did include some comprehension skills in her instruction of the low achievement Sunshines group, the focus was always on lower-order comprehension and decoding skills.

The low achievement reading group met on four of the nine times I observed the classroom. On 1/25, the students, with the teacher's assistance, worked on pages in their workbooks. The lesson focused on putting statements in order. As noted earlier, this activity related to the district objective to "read to note the sequence of events and answer questions about the order," listed under I. Reading, A. Comprehension Skills, 1. Literal. During this lesson, the teacher related the concept of ordering to the student's background knowledge. On 2/1 the students worked on "Jerry's Important Things," which I have analyzed in detail. In the lesson on 2/8 the students were tested on their ability to identify phonetic elements in words. For example, they were asked to circle the long a sounds in words. The only time the Sunshine group read a story as they had done in the lesson on "Jerry's Important Things," was on 3/8, when the students read, "Can a Mouse Really Help?" The lesson began in the same manner in which the lesson on "Jerry's Important Things" began: the teacher began by announcing the page number and repeating it five or six times. During the reading of the story, she suggested that students sound out words when they were stuck, she corrected errors, and she asked other students to help the reader when he was unable to read a word. The focus during reading was on decoding words. After the lesson, the teacher read questions from the teacher's guide. She asked the students to retell the story: "Who can put the story in order?" The teacher also asked several other recall questions: "Who was the hero for today?" "How did mouse show that size wasn't important?" She even tried one inferential question, "Do you think what happened will change how animals look at mouse?" But none of the children tried to answer the question. The focus in this lesson, as in the other lesson analyzed, was on low-order recall and decoding skills. In all cases, the Sunshines' instruction focused on decoding and low-order comprehension skills such as recall and sequencing. In a few cases, students were asked to recall what had happened in the story, but only once were they asked to make inferences.

In contrast, the Towers' instruction focused on high-order comprehension skills. The Towers received reading group instruction on six of the nine times I observed the class. On 1/25, 2/1, 2/22, 3/8, 4/4, they read stories from the basal reader; on 2/8, they worked on a page in their workbooks. On all of the occasions, the teacher greeted the group by asking them questions designed to elicit background information about the topic covered in the story: "Who has made things with a hammer and nails?" (1/25) "Has anyone ever made a violin?" (2/22) "Where does this story take place? Let's get the globe and find China." (3/8) "What does it mean when it says 'sun sets and the lights twinkle on'? Think about what happens in your house at night." (4/4) During the reading of the stories, the teacher focused on comprehension skills and asked questions that asked the students to draw inferences from the stories. In all cases, the inferential questions outnumbered the recall questions. 1/25, "Why didn't the house by the brook last long?" 2/22, "Could you hear the water? Visualize the water?" 3/8, "Is China far from Michigan?" 4/4, "Why did the poet arrange the lines of poetry in that way?" In all cases, the Towers were asked to make use of their background information to understand what they read, and they were encouraged to make inferences and predictions more often than they were asked to recall what had happened in the story.

Clearly, Mrs. Gates had chosen to instruct the Sunshines differently than she had chosen to instruct the Towers. Generally, the instruction of the low achieving Sunshines focused on low-order comprehension skills and on decoding while the instruction of the high achieving Towers focused on high order comprehension skills. The district guidelines--language arts/reading objectives and weekly time allotment chart--did not indicate that students in low achieving groups should be given different instruction than students in high achieving groups. It appeared that other elements in the learning situation gave Mrs. Gates a way of seeing that resulted in the way she taught reading.

To learn what these elements might be, I once again reviewed my fieldnotes. I noticed that, in all cases, Mrs. Gates had relied on and used the teacher's guide that accompanied the basal texts when she instructed her students. To learn whether the teacher's guide had influenced how she taught the two lessons that I had looked at closely, I decided to look at the instructions in the teacher's guides for the two lessons and to compare the guide with what had happened in the lessons.

Although the teacher consulted the teacher's guides for the basal reading series when she instructed the reading groups, the guides did not account for the differential instruction the teacher gave her low achieving and high achieving reading groups.

As I noted earlier, the district had selected a basal reading series that was used throughout the district. The series, published by Houghton Mifflin, provided the teacher with readers, workbooks, teacher's guides. It also provided tests, which the district directed teachers to use to determine whether or not a student should move to a higher reading level. I had noted that in conducting her reading groups, Mrs. Gates consulted the teacher's guide before she started each lesson, that she kept the guide open on her lap or on the table in front of her during the entire lesson, and that she read questions directly from the guide. She followed the story in the guide while the students read, and frequently, with her eyes on the guide, she interrupted the round robin reading with comments such as, "Wait a minute. We have to look at the word 'beaches.' Remember the rule? Words that end in 'ch.' How do we make them plural?" Having observed a number of these incidents, and noting her concern when another teacher asked to borrow her copy of the Sunshines' guide, I assumed that the basal's teacher's guides influenced how she instructed the Sunshines and the Towers. To test my assumption, I looked closely at the teacher's guides and compared their lessons for "Jerry's Important Things" and "The String Collection" with how Mrs. Gates conducted those lessons.

I began my analysis by reading the general information about the series that was included in the introduction to each guide. By reading this material, I found that each lesson in the series followed the same pattern. Each lesson included a skills checklist (the publisher described the checklist as an overview of skills students need to read with confidence and independence); phonics and decoding; vocabulary skills; comprehension skills; reference and study skills; content stories to which children could relate; literacy skills; and other language skills. In addition to the readers, the series included workbooks that focused on practicing skills such as decoding, phonetics, comprehension, and so forth. The teacher was provided with a set of skill charts that corresponded to each reading lesson and a teacher's guide that contained scripts for each story, a listing of skills to develop and resources that could be used to develop them, professional articles to give the teacher "a fresh understanding of teaching strategies" and an "understanding not only how the program works, but why" (Teacher's guide introduction). The guides also included suggestions on how to reach students at all levels and a bibliography to encourage independent reading on the part of the teacher.

I looked closely at the lessons provided in the teacher's guide that were given for the Sunshine lesson, "Jerry's Important Things," and the Towers' lesson, "The String Collection." I found that both lessons, in spite of being aimed at different levels, were organized in the same manner. Each began with a summary of the story with suggestions on how to activate students' background knowledge of the topic of the story and ways to stimulate students' interest in the story. Under the heading "Reading the Selection," both lessons provided the teacher with a teaching script. These scripts were divided into sections titled, "Vocabulary and Concept Development," "Motivation and Silent Reading," "Checking and Developing Comprehension." Each script included the text of the story, references to pages in the story, the same pictures that accompanied the text in the student's book, and questions and reading strategies the teacher was to use during the discussion of the story. In addition to the scripts that guided the teacher through the lesson, the first page of both lessons included a boxed section on the right-hand side of the page that outlined the skills, vocabulary, and resources, basic and optional, to be covered in each lesson.

Looking back over my notes of the two lessons, I found that the teacher had selected one focus for the low achievement group and another for the high achievement group. Although both lessons in the teacher's guide began with a summary of the story and questions to illicit students' background information before they read the story, the teacher had used the summary material with the Towers but not with the Sunshine group. To gain a better understanding of the kind of material the teacher had selected from the teaching scripts, I analyzed both lessons in the guides to determine what kinds of questions each asked and compared the questioning patterns provided in the guides with what happened in the reading groups. I found that the teaching scripts were similar in the kind of questions asked. Both included questions designed to activate students' background knowledge of the text content covered in the story. For example, the story in the Sunshines' book centered around a boy collecting things that were important to him. The story did not tell what the important things were, and it built suspense by telling how Jerry set off to his grandmother's house to show her the important things. On the way, he showed the objects to friends and neighbors who later helped him find the box when it is lost. The summary section suggested that the teacher discuss neighborhoods and friends with the students to prepare them for the story.

The Towers' story was about a man who collected all sorts of things. One collection, string, grew so large that the man had to find a way to get rid of it. The summary section suggested the teacher introduce the concept of problems and solutions to the students to make them think of cause and effect. The first part of the section on vocabulary and concept development suggested that the teacher discuss the idea of collections to prepare the students for the story.

Each lesson also included a number of questions that asked the students to recall specific information from the story. These questions asked the student to find sentences that answer them or to pull together specific information from the story. For example, one such recall question in the Sunshine script was, "What did Mr. Higgins think when he first saw Jerry with the box?" The answer can be found in the text of the story in a single sentence, "'Is that box for me?' asked Mr. Higgins." The Towers script contained similar recall questions. The script included, in bold print, the appropriate answer for each of these recall questions.

Both scripts also included inference questions. These questions asked students to make predictions or draw conclusions based on the information in the story and on the general knowledge that they brought to the story. An example of an inferential question was the question that followed the recall question in the Sunshine text mentioned above. The recall question was, "What did Mr. Higgins think when he first saw Jerry with the box?" The bold-type told the teacher that the answer, "that the box was for him," was the correct answer. The following question asked the students to make an inference based on the information found in the story. The question asked, "Why do you suppose Mr. Higgins thought the box was for him?" The bold type told the teacher that a number of answers would be acceptable for this question. "He was a mail carrier and maybe he thought Jerry was mailing it; maybe he and Jerry were good friends and he thought Jerry had a present for him; accept any reasonable answer." The Towers' script had a number of induction questions that were similar to the induction questions asked in the Sunshine scripts. To determine the balance between background, recall, and inferential questions per script, I counted the number of each. This seemed especially important to do in light of the patterns of instruction I had observed in the two reading gropus. The teacher had focused on lower order skills such as decoding, phonetics, and recall in instructing the Sunshine group and on higher order skills in instructing the Towers group. If the teaching scripts showed a similar pattern, it would be possible to conclude that the teacher's selection of focus was, in part, influenced by the teaching scripts.

The chart in figure 1 shows a comparison of the two scripts. The chart in Figure 2 compares the questioning patterns of the two groups.

Figure 1

QUESTIONING PATTERNS IN THE SUNSHINE AND TOWERS' TEACHING SCRIPTS

SUNSHINE SCRIPTS	TOWERS SCRIPTS
Background knowledge - 2	Background knowledge - 3
Recall - 17	Recall - 21
Inferences - 16	Inferences - 21

Figure 2

TEACHER'S QUESTIONING PATTERNS USED DURING SUNSHINE AND TOWERS' LESSONS ON "JERRY'S IMPORTANT THINGS" AND "THE STRING COLLECTION"

SUNSHINE "Jerry's Important Things"	TOWERS "The String Collection"
Background knowledge - 0	Background knowledge - 5
Recall - 1	Recall - 1
Inferences - 0	Inferences - 5

By comparing the questioning patterns found in the teaching scripts for both lessons, it was clear that the patterns were similar. The number of background questions were similar, two for Sunshine and three for Towers. The ratio between recall and inference questions per lesson were similar, 17 recall to 16 inference for Sunshine and 21 recall and 21 inference for Towers. Clearly, the publisher had focused on similar patterns for high--order questioning--inferences and background--and low-order questioning--recall.

Analyzing my notes on the questioning patterns used during the teacher's instruction for these two stories for these two groups, it became even more clear how differently the two groups were instructed. Despite the number of questions included in the teaching script for the Sunshine lesson, both high-order and low-order, the teacher asked only one recall question during the entire group lesson. In contrast, she used several of the questions from the script for the Towers' lesson, reading some directly from the teacher's guide. Of these questions, she used only one low-order or recall question and five inferential questions. In addition, she drew on the students' background knowledge by asking five such questions even though only three were included in the basal guide's lesson.

This analysis reinforced the pattern of differential instruction that I had found in the other reading group lessons. However, lessons in the basal teacher's guides did not account for the differences in instruction. On the contrary, if the teacher had followed the guides, she would have instructed the Sunshines and the Towers in the same manner. Both reading groups would have received instruction to enhance and develop decoding skills as well as low and high-order comprehension skills. Both groups would have received instruction that encompassed the full range of the district's reading objectives, literal and inferential.

To better understand what influenced how the teacher chose to teach her reading groups, I asked Mrs. Gates how she felt about the basal reading series that the district had provided for her to use. In our conversation about the basal series on 2/8, she said, "I like their series." She nodded her head and there was a thoughtful expression on her face. She crossed her arms over her chest and continued, "They don't recommend using reading groups (pause). . . But I use them because it is the only time the kids get to read." Her tone and body language suggested that she might feel that she had to defend this position, but her determined tone also showed that she had given this some thought and was prepared to defend her position. She added with even more determination--as much to herself as to me, "With six reading groups, I have to adjust it." Given what she had said earlier about the district not understanding what teachers had to deal with, I interpreted her comments to mean that as in deciding how to use her aide, she had considered carefully what the district told her to do and had then thought about what was best for the students in her class. In this case, she had decided, based on some implicit theory of her own, that she would modify the use of the basal reader to meet the needs of her students.

The teacher's personal theory about what it takes to become a reader influenced how she instructed her reading groups and accounted for the differential instruction that the low achieving and high achieving groups received.

To make explicit Mrs. Gates' implicit theory about what students need to know to become readers explicit and to discover how it might have influenced her way of seeing reading instruction, I asked her some questions about how she used the material in the basal reader's guides. I assumed that I might be able to compare her implicit theory to the basal's theory which was stated explicitly in the introduction to the series. I asked her if she used the comprehension questions and the enrichment activities with all of her reading groups. She responded, shaking her head vigorously and speaking in a firm voice, "I can't use those with low groups. They are so far behind. I cannot do more than the basics with them." With greater determination and again as much to herself as to me, she added, "I *have* to move the slow group *ahead*." Her comments revealed that her implicit theory about teaching reading did indeed differ from the interactional model on which the basal reader was based. Unlike the interactional model that rests on the premise that students learn to read through an interaction between decoding and comprehension skills, the teacher's theory--focusing on the basics for the low achievers--indicated that she believed in a bottom-up approach. The bottom-up approach rests on the assumption that students learn to read by mastering a series of skills arranged in a hierarchical manner. The skills at the bottom, decoding and phonetics, must be mastered before a student can move "up" to the higher order skills such as comprehension--inference. Her reference to the low group being behind and her decision to focus on the basics to "move them ahead," all support the assertion that her personal theory of teaching reading was more bottom-up than interactional. What happened during the low group reading instruction also supports this finding. The students engaged in decoding words and in developing decoding skills such as phonetic strategies. In terms of comprehension, the teacher's questions focused on the literal skills rather than on the inferential skills. And, unlike the high group, the low group spent little of its time on any kind of comprehension tasks.

Another phrase the teacher used gave me some insight into her implicit theory. She had on several occasions referred to the low achievement group as "slow." During a conversation with her about Kim, a member of her low achievement group, she said that Kim was behind the others because she was not developmentally ready to learn some of the skills. She said that she had heard a lot about stages of readiness but that it had never meant much to her until her twins were born. Since then, she had noticed that her daughter was about six months ahead of her son. Even if she worked with her son, he could not learn certain concepts until he became developmentally ready. She said that she saw children like Kim in the same way and believed that giving students concepts before they were ready for them can lead to frustration on the child's part. Looking at how she instructed the low group, it was possible that she chose not to ask the high order questions because she did not believe the students were developmentally ready for those skills. In addition, her concern to prepare the students to pass tests and to achieve the district objectives might also provide insight into her choice of what to teach. Like the doctor who treats the most serious wounds first, the teacher focused low group instruction on the skills the students needed for survival on tests.

Analyzing the reading group lessons in terms of the district objectives, I found that the teacher focused on the Word Analysis and Vocabulary objectives while instructing the low group. She focused on the Comprehension objectives with the high group and especially on the inferential skills. Such a pattern was also consistent with how a person who used the bottom-up model would select what to teach and how to deliver instruction. Therefore, I concluded that in so far as a theory about how children learn to read, from a strictly cognitive perspective, the teacher was guided by the bottom-up model of reading. This theory guided the way that she interpreted the district objectives, and the district objectives together with the goal to improve test scores and the guidelines for allocation of class time shaped her definition of reading as a cognitive process. Because she defined group reading as a time to develop these cognitive processes, she focused on skills she believed students would need to become good readers.

The low achievement students had not demonstrated an ability to decode or use phonetic skills. Therefore, the teacher focused on those skills during group reading time, and she selected those activities from the basal reading series that would serve to develop those skills. The high achievement group had shown an ability to decode and recall what they had read. Therefore, the teacher worked on developing higher order skills in these readers. She selected the activities from the basal reader that would enhance the higher order skills and move the high achievement group "up" to higher order skills.

This information suggested that Mrs. Gates had internalized a well developed theory about how to teach reading. Her personal this theory, more than anything else, influenced how she chose to deliver reading instruction. While the district goal to improve test scores and the language arts/reading objectives influenced what she taught and the weekly time allocation influenced when she taught and both worked together to influence how she defined reading, her implicit theory guided how she taught. The standardized tests on which the district wanted the students to do well, and the way in which the district had listed the objectives, reinforced the teacher's implicit theory. The tests focused on testing students' grasp of the basics, the lower-order decoding skills. The reading objecitves listed decoding and literal comprehension skills before higher-order inferential comprehension skills. While the tests and the objectives did not state that lower order skills had to be developed before higher order skills, it seems possible that Mrs. Gates had inferred that her theory was consistent with district goals and objectives. This suggested that the district guidelines and her own beliefs had interacted to produce the pattern of reading instruction that I had observed in her reading groups. Her practical way of seeing what, when, and how to deliver reading group instruction were developed and influenced by elements from outside of her classroom, district guidelines on objectives, use of time, a basal reading series adopted by the district and published by Houghton Mifflin, and by elements inside of herself, her own theories about teaching reading.

While the district's goal to raise test scores, the language arts/reading objectives, and the basal readers might explain how she had learned her way of seeing what, when, and even how she instructed her reading groups on a cognitive level, they might not account for what she looked at on a social level or what she did for the rest of the day. What about how she delivered other kinds of instruction? Reading group instruction occurred during only two hours of the day, and in analyzing what happened during the reading group lessons, I had looked only at elements of the context that influenced what, when, and how she saw the cognitive factors of giving instruction in reading groups. Much more was happening in this classroom than the instruction that occurred in reading groups. To discover how social elements in the context might have shaped Mrs. Gates' ways of seeing learning and how these ways of seeing might influence what, when, and how she delivered instruction, I decided to look for patterns of social interaction that might provide insights into her ways of seeing her classroom and her students.

Social factors influenced the teacher's ways of seeing how to organize her reading groups and her decision to make reading a status symbol in her classroom.

From the first day in Mrs. Gates' classroom, I had observed remarkable social interaction between the teacher and the students and among the students. For example, the teacher rarely needed to reprimand students. The students appeared to know what the teacher expected of them and to do it. There were also few alterations between the students. In fact, they were supportive of each other and frequently enacted small kindnesses to each other. It seemed logical to assume that Mrs. Gates' practical ways of seeing the classroom were influenced by more than her concerns about the cognitive factors involved in learning. In addition to the differential instruction she gave to the Sunshines and the Towers, I also had observed that her social interaction with the two groups was different.

Reviewing my fieldnotes on the Sunshines' lesson on "Jerry's Important Things" and on the Towers' lesson on "The String Collection" to discover patterns of social interaction between Mrs. Gates and the students, I found that the teacher had had very little personal interaction with the Sunshines and a great deal with the Towers. During the Sunshines' lesson, described earlier, Mrs. Gates had kept her eyes on the teacher's guide. She had not made eye contact with the Sunshines when they came to the reading table or when she repeated the page number over and over, and she had kept her eyes on the guide when she read the questions to them. In sharp contrast, in the Towers' lesson discussed earlier, Mrs. Gates had greeted them with a big smile and had participated in their excited chatter before their lesson began. She made eye contact with them during the lesson and interacted with them as they discussed the lesson. But, none of this was remarkable. I had noted similar patterns of social interaction during their other reading lessons. I thought that the differences in instruction might be attributed to Mrs. Gates' concern to meet the Sunshines' cognitive learning needs.

However, on reviewing my notes of the Towers' lesson on "The String Collection," (the cognitive interaction was described earlier), I noted that an unusual social phenomenon occurred. Two members of the Sunshine group tried to join the Towers at the reading table to listen to the story and to become involved in the group's activities. Mrs. Gates would not allow them to join the group, and, in fact, she told them to return to their seats. It was as if she saw the Towers' reading group time as special and that only those who earned the right to be in the high achievement group were permitted to spend that time with her.

The following vignette illustrates the social interaction that occurred during the lesson.

> The teacher finished with the low achievement group and called the Towers to the reading table. As they arrived, she greeted them with a big smile. Her voice and jestures were animated as she joined in their excited chatter about the story they were about to read. In a playful, challenging manner, she asked if they knew what the story was about. Betty said, "I know! I already read it!" The teacher leaned toward Betty, made eye contact and they smiled at each other. She suggested that the others look at the title to the story to get a clue about what it would be about. Then, after they had had time to predict, she asked Betty to tell the others what the story was about.

During this animated discussion, Josh and Malcomb whose desks were closest to the reading table, glanced up from their math papers at the happy group at the table. Both Malcomb and Josh had just returned to their desks after having spent their fifteen minutes in their own reading groups. Josh had been a member of the teacher's Sunshine group reading "Jerry's Important Things," and Malcomb had been a member of the aide's Sunshine group. Their attention was drawn more and more away from their math to the active group at the reading table. When the teacher asked the Towers, "What do you call a person who collects things?" Malcomb started saying to himself over and over, "collector." His mouth moved but he did not make a sound. He caught my eye and smiled at me as he repeated the word. Josh got out of his seat, turned to face the reading table. He kneeled on his desk chair and looked over the students' shoulders to see the books that they held in their hands. He looked curious and smiled slightly.

The teacher asked Betty to read. As she read with expression, Malcomb and Josh left their seats and walked the few steps to the reading table. It was as if their ears were magnets that drew them to the words. Josh stood behind Andy and looked at the pages of the book. When the teacher looked up from the teacher's guide on her lap, she saw Josh and Malcomb. In a voice that suggested "you do not belong here," she said firmly, "Sit down!" Both boys shrugged their shoulders and returned to their seats. However, both sat so that they could still look at the table.

Josh and Malcomb sat in their seats listening to the story. When the teacher began asking questions that created suspense, "How can he solve this M . . A . . JOR, MA . . . JOR PROBLEM?" and the readers were sent into excited chatter, Malcomb and Josh left their seats and moved slowly toward the reading table again. Both approached the table in a somewhat bent over posture. When the got to the table, they placed their elbows on the table. This made them about the same height as the Towers who were seated thereby making them less noticeable. "Why is the ball getting bigger?" "If you were Mr. Fergus, what would you do?" The teacher continued in an animated voice. The Towers responded to these questions in an excited manner. They leaned forward toward the teacher. Their eyes shone, their voices grew louder. Malcomb and Josh looked at Alice's and Andy's books and at the faces of the teacher and the Towers. Suddenly, the teacher noticed Malcomb and Josh standing at the table. Her face clouded over, her smile faded. In a stern voice she said, "Malcomb and Josh, sit down and get to work!" The boys returned to their seats once again. Malcomb sighed and turned his attention to his math. Josh looked at his math but turned once again to listen to the Towers read the end of the story.

> When the Towers excitedly discussed the collections they had received from other people, Josh once again crept to the table. He leaned over beside Andy and put his face in his hand. - The teacher did not seem to notice him until she asked Andy to read. Again, her expression changed when she saw him. In a firm but kind voice, she said quietly but firmly, "Josh, please sit down and do your work." Shoulders slumped, Josh returned to his seat. Easing himself into his seat, he turned sideways and listened to the Towers until they had finished the story. When the teacher asked questions about the story, Josh looked pensively at the group excitedly discussing the story.
>
> Then, he turned around, looked at his math, and sighed. With the excitement at the reading table growing, Josh collected his math book and pencil and moved to a desk near the door out of hearing range of the reading table. The reading group continued their animated discussion and Josh worked on his math. (Fieldnotes, 2/1/84).

This incident suggested to me that the teacher believed that the members of the high achievement group had earned a status that members of the low achievement group had not earned. Because the high achievers had mastered the lower order skills, they could engage in a more interactive learning experience during reading time than the low achievers could. The time the high group spent with the teacher was special for them and for the teacher. That was clear to the whole class. However, only those who had acquired the basic skills and moved "up" in reading could share in this social experience. Thus, the differential instruction I had observed during the high and low groups had a social as well as a cognitive explanation. To get a better understanding of why the teacher chose to deliver instruction as she did in the two groups, I discussed with Mrs. Gates what I had seen when Josh and Malcomb tried to join the high reading group.

During gym period right after the reading lessons on 2/1, I mentioned to the teacher that Josh and Malcomb had seemed really interested in the Towers' reading lesson. She raised her eyebrows, nodded her head and said, "What am I going to do about Josh?" There was a note of exasperation in her voice and a question on her face. Shaking her head from side to side she added, "He seems so interested! You'd think he would work harder!" I interpreted her comments to mean that she had made the high reading group a status symbol in order to encourage the slower students to work harder. Several weeks later when the topic came up again during our interview on February 22, I found that I had been right.

During our interview, I mentioned that from my observations, I had come to the conclusion that reading was a status symbol in her classroom. The teacher smiled and nodded her head, "I make it one." Her voice was firm as she said this. Then, as if she were reflecting on her own words, she added slowly, "Maybe . . . I shouldn't . . ." Her voice trailed off almost into a self question. Then, with determination she said in a firm tone, "But . . . I DO!" Before I could respond, she added, "All of these children can move up if they work." Her eyes moved around the room resting momentarily on each desk; her eyes seemed to see each of the children even though the room was empty except for the two of us. Speaking in a soft voice but with conviction she said as she turned her eyes back to me, "There is a lot of potential here." As she said "here," she looked back at the empty chairs. From the path her eyes had followed and from the thoughtful way in which she had made these observations, I interpreted her words to mean that she was determined to do what had to be done to develop each child's potential. If that involved motivating them to learn by rewarding high achievement, that was what she would do. Clearly, she had given all of these subjects some serious consideration. She had weighed the risk of turning a Josh off by excluding him from the special "club" that the Towers shared with her against the possibility of turning him on to working hard because he wanted to become a member of the high achievers club. Her comment that all children could move up if they worked hard suggested that she had made it clear to the students that working hard on the basic skills would help them become good reades like the Towers were. Therefore, she had taken these social considerations into account when she chose how to instruct her reading groups.

The teacher's way of seeing what, when, and how to instruct students had been influenced by her overarching theory that learning is a socially mediated process and that in selecting what, when, and how to instruct students, a teacher must take social factors into consideration.

To discover the other social factors that Mrs. Gates included in her definition of learning and to understand how they might play a role in students' learning to read, I looked at reading activities other than the reading groups to see if a pattern of differential treatment could be found there. I found that these "unofficial" reading activities looked much more like all of the other instruction that took place in the room. Unlike the instruction in the reading groups where a small number of students worked with the teacher or aide, the other instruction involved the whole class interacting with the teacher or in a few cases with the aide. During the whole group instruction, the students interacted with the teacher very much as the high group had interacted with her during reading groups. That is, there was a spirit of mutuality and exchange. In many ways the teacher acted like an older peer rather than like an adult who demanded constant control of the learning environment. In fact, during one of our phone conversations, the teacher had said that she tried to be their friend as well as their teacher. She added that being their friend did not interfere with her teaching, that the students still respected her, and from what I observed, she was right. In fact, the interaction between her and the students seemed to do much to enhance learning.

To understand her theory behind her actions, I focused on several activities that had seemed especially important to her and to some that represented the social aspect of the classroom especially well. What I uncovered were a set of her personal beliefs that explain how she selected and delivered instruction in the unofficial reading activities. These beliefs made up her theory that all learning was a social process as well as a cognitive one and that this was especially true of learning to read.

In looking for activities that seemed to reflect the teacher's concern to make learning more than a cognitive activity, I looked once again at the events surrounding the acting out of the legend. After all, that had been the activity the teacher had identified as an unofficial reading activity. Previously, I had looked at the activity from the cognitive perspective. This time I looked at it from the social perspective. Judging from what happened during the time when the class worked on the legend and what the teacher said about the activity, I concluded that the teacher believed that the students had to engage in activities that would show them that reading was something more than decoding words, that reading was a way of interpreting the world. Words were not abstract symbols on the page but representations of actions and things that we find in our lives.

The following vignette illustrates the social interaction that occured during the leasson on the legend.

> On February 22, after gym period, Andy taught the class to make an orgami board. When he had finished, the teacher said, "Give Andy a big hand." All of the students clapped. "We have a couple of things to do in a few minutes." The children talked excitedly and moved around in their seats. "I don't see your eyes." Once she got their attention, she asked, "Who knows what a legend or a folktale is?" Hands shot up. "Malcolm?" the teacher said looking at Malcolm, a smile on her face. "It's old," Malcolm said with a satisfied expression on his face. The teacher nodded and smiled at him. "Andy?" Andy said, "A story that happened a long time ago." The teacher nodded her approval. "Jamal?" "It is a story about your ancestors, people who were born before your mother!" Jamal replied. Several other students suggested additions to the definition before the teacher said, "It is an old story that is retold over and over about people born a long time ago." She did an excellent job of getting most of the children's definitions into her definition and used the words that they had used. "Barb, Betty, and Renee are going to read the legend for us. It is an African folktale. If we have time, we will act it out." The children squirmed gleefully in their seats; their eyes were shining with excitement.
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> Barb began, "The Talking Yam," by reading the title. The teacher put her hand on Barb's arm to stop her, and she asked the class, "Who knows what a yam is?" The children shrugged their shoulders. The teacher explained that yams were sort of like potatoes. She said, "They grow in the _______?" The children filled in the blank. Some said "garden." Others said, "ground." The teacher repeated, "ground." Then she asked, "Can you visualize a field of yams?" The children nodded their heads. "Ok, let's read." As Barb and Betty, and Renee read, the children listened. Josh played with his boat but listened quietly. When the girls had finished the story, the teacher asked, "Who would

like to play the farmer?" Several hands shot up. "Jerry? Jerry left his seat and walked to the front of the room and stood beside the teacher. "I'll read the story and you act out the words." As she read the first part of the story about the farmer working in the field, Jerry acted as if he were raking the soil or digging. When the teacher read the part that said someone talked to the farmer, and that he was surprised, Jerry ran across the room toward the door away from the teacher. The teacher stopped, laughing and with her eyes opened wide, she said, "No, no. How would you act if someone spoke to you and no one was there except the animals?" Jerry ran again. More seriously, the teacher shook her head. "Who can act it out?" Terri and Andy went to the front of the room. They ran also. "No, no" the teacher said again shaking her head. "Listen to what the words say." She read the sentence again, "The man was surprised." Looking up she added, "The words don't say the man ran; they say the man was surprised. Who can act out surprised?" This time Jerry acted surprised and the teacher read on after she nodded her head and smiled her approval.

The next part of the story was about the dog's reaction to the voice. The teacher asked, "How could you be a dog and act that out?" "Laura?" Laura walked to the front of the room and acted out the dog's part. More and more of the students joined the others at the front of the room. The teacher seemed to try to give everyone a turn. As the excitement grew, some of the students used verbal responses but the teacher reminded them, "Don't say it. You have to act it out!" Even the students who were still at their desks began to act out the parts. Josh stood beside his desk acting. Andy moved up the aisle to the front of his row. "Who could act that out," the teacher repeated over and over. Her face was as animated as the children's. She was clearly enjoying this shared experience with the students.

When she had read through the story and had asked the students to return to their seats, congratulating them on listening and acting so well, she turned to look at the clock. A cloud spread over her face, the smile was replaced with a frown. She murmured in a voice loud enough for me to hear, "We really went over on that!" she said sounding distressed. "One, two, heads down." For a moment she looked as though she was not sure what she should do, then she said, "Let's talk about the story." Some students said that the class should act out the story for the whole school. They chatter excitedly and the teacher told them to do their jobs so that they could be the first class to go to the bake sale. As she walked by me on her way to her desk, she looked at me, shrugged her shoulders and repeated, "we really went over on that!" (Fieldnotes, 2/22/84).

Later that day after the children had gone home, during our interview, she talked about the activity with me. She said that she would like to have more time to do things such as the legend because "It is so good for them." I didn't follow up on her comment until a few weeks later when she had made a similar comment about an unofficial reading activity--record time. I asked what she meant by the comment. I told her I had an idea why I thought such activities were good for kids but wanted to know what she meant. She responded by saying, "Oh, it is important for them to see there is more to reading than books. They would get bored working in their books all of the time. I would get bored," she added thoughtfully. I interpreted this to mean that the slower students would get bored by working in their basal readers all of the time. She had noted once that the slow group wore her out, and I assumed that she was talking about the slow group more than the high achievers.

As if she were reading my mind she added, "It isn't good for kids to be at the bottom all of the time. They have to have a chance to be successful sometimes." We discussed how important activities like the legend were to the slower students, how they made the students see reading in a different way. Clearly from what she had stressed during the activity, that words had a precise meaning and that they represented real life, the teacher valued such activities because they made reading meaningful to the students who were still working on mastering the basics. By giving them an experience with reading, that was successful and fun, she hoped to stimulate their desire to work hard at the less exciting task of decoding so that they could participate in the fun reading could bring. Just as she had encouraged them to learn to read by making reading a status symbol in her classroom, she was showing them the rewards reading could bring them. The slower students did not have to wait to join the high achievement "club" to have reading become meaningful to them. Generally, the beliefs behind this activity were that all children should have an opportunity to be successful and to see that reading is more than decoding, that it is a way to understand and to learn about the world.

Several other activities had similar characteristics. Record time also provided an opportunity for all children to participate. Any child could bring a record or tape with a story book from home and share it with the class on Wednesday afternoons. The person who brought the book got the added advantage of sitting in front of the class to hold the book up for the children to see the pictures while the teacher played the record. On all of these occasions, the teacher asked the children to clap for the record/tape and book and for the child who brought it to class. When I looked at the activities that surrounded record time, I found that the activity gave all children a chance to relate the new story to past experiences they had had, to discuss with the class why and how the story was meaningful to them.

Mrs. Gates used a similar instructional approach in teaching math. She explained new math concepts to them in ways that made it possible for them to relate the concepts to their own lives and to things they already understood. On 2/1, Mrs. Gates conducted a math lesson that illustrated how she helped students relate new math concepts to things in their own experience and to concepts that they already understood.

> At 12:35, the teacher announced, "Time for math. Get into your math groups." The students collected their pencils and books from their desks and moved to the section of the room where their math group met. The students in group 1 went to the seats on the east side of the classroom while the students in group 2 moved to the desks on the west side. For the first ten minutes of the lesson, with the teacher's guidance, the students in math group 1 explained carrying to math group 2. Then the aide worked with math group 2 while the teacher worked with group 1.
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> "Today you are to start learning borrowing." Mrs. Gates had a smile on her face as she made this announcement. Her voice carried a note of excitement, and she leaned over and toward the students as she spoke. The students in math group 1 wriggled in their seats and smiled at each other. With a look of pride and anticipation on their faces, they met the teacher's eyes to indicate that they were ready to begin. "Borrowing is the opposite of carrying." As she said this, she looked at the teacher's guide for the math text and wrote 58 on the board. "Now we are getting ready to borrow. 58 is made up of how many groups of 10?" Several of the students called out, "Five." Mrs. Gates looked at the students and said, "That is right. How many ones are in 58?" Again several students called out the answer, "Eight!" "Right again. Now what happens when we subtract 19?" The students looked puzzled. Several frowned as they contemplated the problem on the board.
>
> Renee said, "What DO we do?"
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> Mrs. Gates laughed. "All right, let me show you. The book is getting you ready to borrow. Let me explain what they want you to do. We can't subtract 9 from 8, can we?" The children shook their heads, their eyes wandered from the board to the teacher's face. "What we have to do is borrow one group of tens from the tens place so we can subtract 9 from 18." The students still looked puzzled. "It's like the 8 says, 'Hey, tens, I need to borrow one group of tens. I need this so I can be bigger.'" As she said this, she lowered her voice and changed her intonation to indicate that it was 8 speaking and not her. The children laughed. "What happens to 8 when it borrows one group of tens? What does 8 become? Renee raised her hand; in fact, her hand shot up so fast that it seemed to pull her right out of her seat. "Renee?"

> "It becomes 18! It's like saying can I borrow some sugar or can I borrow a crayon!" Her face shone as she demonstrated that she understood the concept of borrowing. Several of the other students said, "Yeah" to themselves and their neighbors.
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> "It's like you need an orange and someone has lots of them. You say, 'I need an orange. Can I borrow one?'" Jamal looked at the teacher as he said this, his eyes sparkled in his smiling face.
>
> Mrs. Gates laughed. She looked around the group, "You seem to understand the concept of borrowing verrry welll. Now who can tell me using the words "tens" and "ones" what happens to the eight?" Barb raised her hand and Mrs. Gates said, "Barb?"
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> "The 8 becomes 18, one group of tens and 8 ones."
>
> "That is right, Barb." Mrs. Gates wrote the words "one group of 10" and "8 ones" on the board as he said this. "What happens to the 50 when it gives 8 one group of tens?"
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> "It goes down to 40," Jamal called out.
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> "Right, what they are saying is 58 is the same as 40 plus 18." The teacher wrote 40+18 on the board. Does everyone understand?" Most of the students nodded their heads and smiled and repeated several times, "I do, I do!" Pham shook his head back and forth; there was a frown on his face." Mrs. Gates saw his reaction and said, "Who can explain it to Pham?" Hands shot up. "Ok, Nia, go to the board and explain."
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> Nia went to the board and explained how the 8 borrowed one set of tens from the 50. When she finished explaining, Nia leaned forward and looked in Pham's face. Mrs. Gates looked at Pham and asked, "Do you understand now?" Pham nodded his head to indicate that he did. "Good," Mrs. Gates smiled at him. Nia smiled and walked back to her seat; she looked satisfied with herself. "Pham, go to the board and explain so I know that you know." Pham walked to the board and in a small, soft voice, repeated what Nia and Mrs. Gates had said. When he finished, the teacher and the other students clapped for him. "Verry good!" On pages 209 and 210, they are getting you ready for borrowing. You get to practice borrowing one group of tens to make the ones bigger!" The students turned to the assigned pages and started to work. (Fieldnotes, 2/1/84).

As she had done with words and the story in the legend and during record time, Mrs. Gates had given the students a way of relating a new concept in math to their everyday lives. She had guided them through the math lesson by illustrating, in words and on the board, the procedure that they would use to solve similar problems. As part of this support, she supplied them with a link to their common understanding of the concept of borrowing--the personification of the number 8--and reinforced the new idea by encouraging students to tie it to their own experiences. By asking one of the students to explain the concept and procedure to Pham rather than doing it herself, she had an opportunity to assess whether or not the children had really internalized the procedure.

She had told me after the first part of the lesson, when math group 1 explained carrying to math group 2, and they had shown that they didn't understand carrying as well as she had thought, that she felt it was important for her to ask the students to explain what they understood because as she put it, "They get some pretty funny ideas sometimes. I like to have them explain things to me so I can tell what they are thinking."

The manner in which Mrs. Gates structured the lessons during the legend, record time and math, suggested that she believed that learning is a socially mediated process. As the person with the greater knowledge of the concept to be learned, she scaffolded the learning situation by focusing instruction at the place where the students were--their past experience or prior knowledge of a concept--and in language they could understand, she modeled the procedure that they could use to understand what they were reading or solve the problem with which they were confronted. To assess what and how they had internalized, she then gave the students an opportunity to make their internalized knowledge external by asking them to explain to her or to other students or, in the case of the legend, with their actions what they had learned.

The teacher's way of seeing how to organize instruction was influenced by her belief that parents should be involved in their children's education and that schools should find ways to tie home and school together.

In addition to giving the teacher a way to show students how reading was tied to their own lives, record time provided an opportunity to get parents involved in their children's educations and to tie home and school together.

The children always enjoyed record time. The teacher always announced it as, "Time for, 'Bring a record or tape from home,'" and she often told students that she needed them to bring good records like the one they had just heard. She encouraged those who might not have such books and records at home to get them from the library. I began to understand the additional purpose behind this activity when she commented one day, "This is really working. Carlos's parents took him to the library to get a record and book!" She seemed very pleased. From her comment I realized that by asking the students to bring books from home, she had given them the idea that it was good to have books at home, that reading was not just for school. By suggesting that they get books from the library, she had found a way to involve parents who might not be able to afford to buy their children books and records.

Carlos was one of her low achievement readers. Getting his parents involved in his reading was important to the teacher. I looked for more activities where she tied school activities to the home and found that there were many.

From the number of these activities, both in math and in reading, I found that the teacher had some very strong beliefs about the role that parents should play in their children's educations. During one of our phone conversations when we were lamenting that we might be neglecting our own children while we worked so hard to educate other people's children, the teacher said that she had considered working part-time. "My little guys will be in first grade next year, and they could use some help with reading." This comment keyed me to look for ways that she might try to involve her students' parents in the educational process.

I found that she sent vocabulary lists home and that the parents were expected to help their children. (Kim, one of the low achievement readers explained the process to me.) Mrs. Gates got very upset with parents who did not help. During our interview, I had asked her if many of the students in her class were underprivileged. She said that all were poor. But she added a comment that showed that she did not see poverty in the home as an excuse for children not to learn. She said, "Kim is one of the poorest. But people spend time with her. Josh is an only child, but his mother won't work with him. She says that she gets frustrated." The final statement was delivered with a frown on her face and a tone of exasperation in her voice. "You can be disadvantaged and still give kids time."

To further reinforce her belief that parents should help their children, she told me about the letters she wrote to parents. I had seen one on her desk reminding parents that she had asked them to work on math facts with their children. In one part she said that she was sure that they wanted their child to do well and asked them to return this letter saying that they would agree to work with their child. Therefore, when she explained the letters she wrote, I had some idea about what she meant. "I write them letters. The first ones are nice." Her eyes sparkled and she laughed, "The next ones sound like those letters you get when you don't pay your bills. They get nasty!" Her expression showed that she felt she had a right and a responsibility to do what she could to involve parents in their children's educations. All of these comments showed how important Mrs. Gates thought it was for parents to become involved in the process of students learning to read. Mrs. Gates believed that school and home should work together.

On my last day observing the class, I found yet another activity that showed how she organized instruction to tie reading in school to reading at home and to involve parents in the reading process. A parent came into the room while the students were working on an art project. I was helping two students near the door but noticed that the parent was going to children, one at a time, asking them something, and they, in turn, were giving her books with slips of paper in them.

When I had finished helping the students with their projects, I walked to the back of the room by the art work and talked to the mother. She said that she was there to check the children's books. I asked if they were library books and she said no. I asked if they were RIF books, and she explained that they were not. They were books that she and the teacher had collected the year before when her child had been in the teacher's class. The children took them home to read them to their parents. The parents had to sign the slip of paper in the book and tell how many pages they had read with the child. The parent explained that the project had worked so well the previous year that the teacher had asked her to help with it again this year. She said that it was hard to find new books for the students who finished all the titles in the collection but that the program had really improved the students' reading.

Mrs. Gates made every possible effort to make reading a home and a school activity and to bring together the culture of schooling and the child's home culture. By sending books into the homes and by asking parents to help their children read and work on math, she seemed to try to bridge the gap between home and school. She also kept in close contact with parents by writing them letters and by meeting with them in conferences at school. She was especially pleased when 100% of her students' parents attended the last parent conferences of the year. As a parent herself, she had certain expectations about the role she believed she should play in her chldren's educations, and as a teacher, she did what she could to show parents what they could and should do to participate in their children's educations. Therefore, by tying school and home together, she had helped parents learn ways that they could help their children negotiate their way through school, and she had found ways to show students that learning was not just a school based activity.

The teacher's way of seeing her role in instruction was influenced by her belief that teachers should be committed to their students.

Mrs. Gates was committed to providing her students with the best educational experiences that she could. She noted on many occasions that the students in her classroom were poor and did not have the advantages that her own children or children in suburban schools had. To compensate for some of the disadvantages the children experienced, Mrs. Gates arranged special fieldtrips and classroom projects. When the school system told her that she could not have a bus to transport her students to a local science museum, she arranged free transportation on city busses. On other occasions, she contacted parents and asked them to walk with her and her class to points of interest that were near the school. When the district budget cuts eliminated art teachers, Mrs. Gates volunteered to be the school's art coordinator and planned art activities for her class and the school.

As the art coordinator, Mrs. Gates was in charge of informing teachers about opportunities for their students to enter art contests or display their work outside the school in local malls or public buildings. During the course of the study, her own students made a mural for "Women in History" month and displayed it at a local mall. In addition, she organized a school art display that was part of a district show-case for the school district. One incident relating to this display showed how dedicated Mrs. Gates was to her students and how she felt about teachers who did not share her devotion.

> As the art coordinator for the school, Mrs. Gates was in charge of getting together art work from each of the classrooms in the school to send to a school showcase held in a local mall. Each teacher was to select one piece of artwork from her class, mount it, and complete an official entry form. On the day that the display pieces were to be taken to the central office, the principal came to the teacher's room while she was reading the students a story about Martin Luther King, Jr. to tell her that one teacher had not completed her part of the project. The teacher told him that she would take care of it as soon as she finished reading the story. By the time she had finished, her aide had left. The project entries were in the art room on the first floor. Therefore, the teacher asked her class to follow her quietly to the art room.
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> When they got there, the teacher mounted the other teacher's project, filled in the entry blank except for the teacher's signature. While she worked, she talked calmly to the class explaining that they could visit the project at the mall. She showed them several of the pieces and explained that they--she was the only one working--were working on the last piece to help the principal.
>
> When she had finished the teacher's project, she explained to the students that now they had to find the teacher to have her sign the entry form. With the class following her, they all walked quietly to the other teacher's room on the second floor. However, the teacher was not in her room. Another student said that he had seen the teacher in the office a few minutes ago. The class turned around, followed their teacher back down to the first floor. Just as they were nearing the office, a woman dressed in an expensive-looking red wool coordinated outfit walked out of the office. She looked past the teacher and her class. In fact, she started to walk by the teacher even when Mrs. Gates said, "We were looking for you." When Mrs. Gates quietly explained that she needed the other teacher to sign the art entry form, the other teacher took the art work out of the teacher's hand saying that she would take it to her room to sign. At no time did the other teacher make eye contact with Mrs Gates; she acted very distant and superior. Mrs. Gates, in a calm and friendly voice, suggested that there would be a pen in the office.

> She touched the other teacher on the elbow and gently guided her into the office before the other teacher could respond.
>
> After taking the art work to the principal, the teacher and her class returned to the room to get ready to go home. Throughout the entire incident, I had been struck by how calmly the Mrs. Gates had acted. As she stood by her door watching the children get their things from their lockers, she talked to me about what had happened. In a low voice, she said, "I am sooooo angry. Some people in this school won't do a thing for these children because they are underprivileged!" Her eyes flashed with anger. I was surprised because I had not even noticed by her expression that she was upset. She continued, "She was going to take that to her room to sign. She would have just left it there. She wouldn't have signed it!" Looking at me, her face softened and a concerned expression spread over her face. "Oh, dear. Now you've seen my bad side." Her voice dropped. I assured her that such an incident would have made me angry too and that if this was her bad side, she must be a saint. Shaking her head, she said in a calmer voice that showed bewilderment now rather than anger, "I just don't understand people like that." (Fieldnotes, 2/22/84).

Mrs. Gates' reactions to and comments about this incident demonstrated how committed she was to her students and showed that her beliefs about what teachers should do had influenced how she treated her students and how she thought other teachers should treat their students. Her actions also showed that her commitment to her students influenced how she saw her students and their instructional needs. She believed that it was important to treat her students as more advantaged students were treated, to give them opportunities to participate in activities that could make them proud of themselves and of their school.

The teacher's way of seeing learning as a socially mediated, interactive process influenced how she saw her students, how she related to them during instruction, and how she encouraged them to become independent.

Another activity that revealed still more of the teacher's beliefs that learning was socially mediated, was the reading of a Scholastic News magazine on 4/18. While I had noted patterns in many activities that revealed these beliefs, the events surrounding the reading of the Scholastic News illustrated the teacher's belief that to learn to read, children must be able to make reading meaningful to themselves, that students must feel free to express their ideas--feel safe to take risks--so that the teacher could correct misconceptions as they developed, that all children must see the value in their own way of seeing the world, and that students can learn from each other as well as the teacher and, in fact, must become independent of the teacher in the end.

The following vignette illustrates many of Mrs. Gates' beliefs.

> At about 1:00 when the students would usually have divided into reading groups, the teacher walked around the class and passed out copies of the Scholastic News. As she did so, she talked to the class and interacted with them. One student said, "This is old!" The date on the magazine read April 6, 1984 and it was April 18. The teacher nodded, shrugged her shoulders, and in a voice that said, "Dumb me!", she said, "I know . . . I don't know how these got buried on my desk. With parent conferences, I guess I just forgot!" With mock disgust, several students looked up into her face as she gave them their copy and shook their heads. (The teacher often asked them to remind her to do things. "You know how for . . . getful I am. You have to remind me," and this seemed like one of those incidents to them.) The teacher was good natured about the situation and announced once again after each child had a copy, "This is late," she waved it in her hands. "We were supposed to do it one of the half days,

but we are ten days late!" Again, some students shook their heads and smiled to themselves.

"Well, let's read it anyway," she said with a shrug. She explained that the first article was about the President going to China and that because they were reading the magazine late, he had already returned. She asked the student in the far southwest corner to begin reading. (Most of the better readers sat in that area of the room.) Jerry read the article on China on the first page. When he had finished, the teacher asked, "Who can find China on the wall map?" Hands shot up. She asked Jerry to pull down the map, and she said, "Raise your hand if you want to come up." Most of the children hurried over to the map. They chattered excitedly as they looked for China. One group of children on the right side of the map pointed to an area on the right side of the map and explaimed, "Here's China!" At about the same time, the group on the left side of the map pointed to an area on the left side of the map and exclaimed, "Here is China!" The teacher looked puzzled and walked to the map. She asked the children to show her China and discovered that, in fact, China had been divided and did appear on the left and the right side of the map. Before she had a chance to comment, Nia sitting in her seat near the map said loudly enough for everyone to hear in a matter-of-fact tone, "Oh, there are two Chinas. In one, the people are from China, in the other, from Japan!" The teacher laughed and said to herself, "Oh, oh . . . . ." She walked toward the bookcase in the back of the room. "Who can explain why there are two China's on the map?" Andy raised his hand and explained that the world was round but that the map was flat, therefore the map flattened out the world and cut China in half. The children listened but seemed confused. The teacher walked back toward the students with the globe in her hands. She pointed out that Andy had been correct, the world was round. There was only one China, and she pointed to it on the globe. She walked around the class to show the children. Many of the children laughed at the mistake they had make and talked softly with their neighbors about how silly they had been.

Jeff asked the teacher how far China was from Michigan. When the teacher showed him, he said with his eyes wide open, "That's far . . ." The teacher said that it was and pointed out that three of the children in the class had come from as far away as China. "We have three children from Southeast Asia, Nia is from Laos, Thu is from Vietnam. Pham, are you from Vietnam too?" Pham nodded and the teacher repeated, "Nia is from Laos, and Thu and Pham are from Vietnam." The children looked from Nia, Thu, and Pham to the globe and back. Most had an expression of wonderment on their faces. Many said aloud and to themselves, "That is a long way!" Andy said that he had a pen pal in Japan. The teacher pointed out Japan on the globe and said, "Oh, you do? Do you have a letter you've gotten recently?" Andy said that he did and she replied, "Bring it to school, will you?" Andy said that he would and that he could also bring a picture of his pen pal.

The students went on to read the next article. It was titled, "China's Children Keep Fit." When the children had read the whole article, the teacher asked them questions about what they had read. "How long do they exercise?" "What time do they get up to exercise?" Finally, she asked the children if they exercised. Many told about their personal exercise programs. Nia commented that when she lived in Laos, she had to walk a lot. She said that was exercise. The teacher asked Nia to tell the class the story that her grandmother told her about why her family left their country. (Nia had drawn a picture several weeks before and had told the teacher it was of the place where she used to live. She had then told the teacher the story of her family's flight across mountains and rivers to get to Thailand. The story had focused on what the countryside looked like).

Nia told the class the story. This version was different from the one she had told the teacher a few weeks before. "My father was the president...no...the head of the village. The bad Vietnamese came and told us to bring them all of our chickens and food . . . . We had to go to Thailand. We got up early in the morning and pretended to go to the gardens. But, we didn't. We hid things in caves and walked. We jumped over a lake, . . . no, a river. We slept in a cave . . ." The teacher asked Nia questions about how they got food and water. "We carried the food. That is why I had to walk. The food was too heavy for my father to carry it and me. It was very rocky. We had to walk in water; it was very rocky." At one point Nia talked about the people who had been killed. That part of the story was disjointed, but she mentioned relatives, cousins, uncles. Most of the children listened intently. Jeff looked at Nia's face as she spoke--a far away expression on her face--and asked her questions such as, "How long did it take to get from one lake to the other?" Nia looked and sounded as if she were reliving the experience as she talked about it. When she finished, Jeff looked into her face and said to himself, "China is sooooo far." There was a look of admiration on his face as he looked from Nia to Pham to Thu.

The teacher asked Thu and Pham if they remembered their trips to the United States. Both of them shrugged and didn't say anything. The teacher went on and asked the students to read the next article. She began by asking who could use a computer. When each person who had something to say had finished, she asked the students to read aloud. The next article dealt with Chinese counting and under "Try This," asked the children to write numbers in Chinese. The teacher told the children to try it. Some of them said that they couldn't. The teacher smiled and said, "Oh, you have to

> try." After they had had time to draw the numbers, she said, "How many of you tried it?" Almost all hands went up. "I'll walk around and see." She walked around congratulating those who had gotten it right and helping those who had not, or who had not tried.
>
> When she had looked at each paper, she asked, "What would 35 look like?" All of the students wanted to show her, but she sent two children to the board to show the class. Finally, the students read the rest of the articles and even the comments given for each day on the calendar. They discussed pets and stopped only when the teacher asked them to get into their math groups. (Fieldnotes, 4/18/84).

The activity showed the interactive nature of the teacher's teaching. She admitted that she could make errors and encouraged the students to try new things even if they might make mistakes. Her attitude about her own mistakes made the students accept their errors and gave them the confidence to try something new. In addition, by feeling free to talk about what they thought--there were two China's--the students gave the teacher a chance to respond to their errors or misconceptions and correct them. She did not make them feel ashamed that they had made a mistake, but treated errors as natural. The students, confronted by the globe, admitted their error and even laughed at themselves. By letting the students relate what they read to their own experiences and by encouraging Nia to share her story with the class making the distance between Michigan and China meaningful to them, the teacher once again showed the students that reading was about understanding more about the world. Finally, the interactive nature of the instruction, helped the students see that they had a role in the learning process. The teacher was not the only one to control the direction the lesson took. Nia's telling of her story, Andy's discussion of his pen pal, and Betty's suggestion that they take turns and read the comments on the calendar, showed that the teacher was willing to give students power over their own learning experiences.

In discussing the activity on the phone later, she commented that the students had really taken over, "They really took o..ver!" I knew she was pleased because in another conversation, she had talked about how important it was for students to become independent. She had said that she wanted her own children to be independent and that she had encouraged Barb's parents to give her the freedom and responsibility of walking home alone to help her develop independence.

In addition to saying this about the activity, the teacher had also described the activity as a "real learning experience." Talking about Nia telling her story, she said, "They really got into it! It was a real learning experience! They learned something that they will remember longer than 'cat,' 'sat,' 'hat.'" She said that if I hadn't asked about the activity that she might not have considered it a learning experience, but that by reflecting on it, she saw that it was. Considering that this activity had taken the place of "official" reading and that she had mentioned an "official" reading activity--learning words--I interpreted her comments to mean that she realized just how much the students had learned about reading during the activity. Her comment that they "really got into it," must have referred to the children's getting involved in the words, in the content of what they had read. By making China alive for them through Nia and the globe, the activity helped them see that reading was a way to learn more about the world. And, reading had been the activity that had helped the children learn more about one of their friends, Nia, to see her in a way they would not have seen her or Thu or Pham if they had not read the magazine about China. Reading was a way of giving them experience that they would not get otherwise, a way of changing the way they saw the world and themselves.

This pattern of instruction was found across the curriculum, in math, writing, social studies, and science. Clearly, the teacher's beliefs about how to create a social context for learning overarched her beliefs about what should be taught.

One other element of that theory was revealed in her comments about a daily writing activity. I had noted that students worked on what was called "boardwork" every day I had observed. A list of words were placed on the board, written on large lined paper and taped to the board. The following was what was on the paper on 3/8.

Boardwork

tomorrow
today
yesterday
is
was
January
behavior
cloudy
good

I
cold
warm
February
foggy
snowing
raining

feel
sunny
March
windy

The teacher explained that in the beginning of the year, the students had written a news story by copying the sentences that she put on the Boardwork sheet. As the year progressed, she had given them less and less of the words. Now, the words on the board were words that they might use in their news story. Each child was to write his own story using whatever words he selected from the list. Each story still began with "Today is . . . ." The second sentence began with "Tomorrow is . . ." and the third with "Yesterday . . . ." The teacher pointed out that she believed it was important to give students support when they were learning to do something new and to gradually withdraw that support as they mastered the skill. Without the initial support, she did not believe that she could expect students to perform: but as she had shown in the reading of the Scholastic News, she felt that it was important to let kids eventually stand on their own. This kind of scaffolding was also seen in math. (Note the math lesson on borrowing.)

Given these were the teacher's beliefs about what to teach and how to teach reading, it seemed that she defined her role in the process as an interpreter of district objectives and a creator of a learning environment that would foster learning. In the "official" reading activities, she focused on decoding skills. From the analysis of "unofficial" reading activities, it appeared that she believed the environment should be interactive between teacher and student, that the teacher should scaffold the learning situation for the child and gradually withdraw that support, that the teacher should listen to what students say and correct misconceptions as they arise, that the teacher should acknowledge each child as an individual with a personal history and culture, that the teacher should do whatever possible to bridge the gap between school and home and make learning a home-based process as well as a school-based process.

The teacher's ways of seeing what, when, and how to deliver instruction have influenced how the children saw reading and have helped even the least competent reader in the class consider himself a reader.

The children in the setting seemed to respond to the teacher and to carry many of her beliefs out of the setting. Although I was unable to interview each student, or talk with parents, I did hear parents talking with the teacher and did talk to several children. On one occasion, Andy's mother came into the classroom after school while the teacher and I were talking. She told the teacher how Andy had been reading the books that he brought home to read to his parents. "He was trying to read them the way he practices to read his book in front of the class! I told him he didn't have to do that. Now, he is reading lots more. And, those are good books! We just finished one on whales!" She was obviously excited about the program and reading had obviously become a home activity for Andy. But, that was to be expected. Andy was one of the best readers, and he often talked about activities he and his parents participated in such as going to plays at the local community college. I began to wonder how a slow reader such as Josh might see reading. The teacher had said that his mother did not work with him. Did he see reading as strictly a school-based activity? Was reading meaningful to him or was it just decoding?

To get a better sense of how he saw reading, I tried to watch him closely during group lessons and whole group activities. The day he tried to join the high achievement group, I started to see that he loved to hear people read. He was attentive and involved. One day when Barb was reading to the class as part of her regular turn to do that, Josh listened intently. Then he whispered to the teacher who was standing beside him, "Will she show the pictures?" Another time during silent reading, he took a book with dinosaurs on it out of his desk, looked at the cover, hugged the book, and opened it to read. He sounded out the words and looked at the pictures.

Another time while the class was walking back from the gym, he asked me what I was doing in the class--it was about my fifth visit. He asked if I was an aide. I said that I was not but that I was there to find out how children learned to read. His face got very serious. He frowned. He said, "Oh, learning to read is hard." He paused to think, and then his face brightened, and he smiled and said, "But, you can learn if you work hard!" I had heard the teacher use those exact words, "but you can learn if you work hard," several weeks before during a reading group lesson. Josh clearly had internalized those words. He had even used the teacher's inflection in delivering them! A couple weeks later, while I was sitting at the teacher's desk during high group reading, Josh came to the desk. He didn't say anything, but he touched a book about dinosaurs on the teacher's desk. I whispered that he seemed to like dinosaurs. He looked at me seriously and said emphatically, "I like to READ about them!" Later that day, he told me that he was taking a pencil home with him. "I have books to work in at home." These comments added to my sense that the teacher had instilled in Josh a desire to learn to read, a sense that working on books at home was good, and that reading was a valuable activity. Therefore, it would appear that even the poorest reader in the class saw value in acquiring literacy and saw it as more than a school activity. Reading appeared to be meaningful to Josh and a way to learn about something he loves.

Summary and Conclusions

In becoming a participant observer in Mrs. Gates' classroom, I set out to answer the following questions: (1) What happens in this setting to promote the acquisition of literacy? (2) How does the teacher define literacy? (3) How did she come to define it in this way? (4) Have the elements of the context taught her what to teach, when to teach it, and how to teach it? (5) Do the elements in the context that influence what, when, and how the teacher teaches remain constant or do they change over time? While it is not possible for a participant observer to attain totally the emic perspective of the teacher and thus arrive at a definitive conclusion about how the teacher in a particular setting learned her practical ways of seeing, it is possible for the participant observer to identify emergent patterns that suggest which elements of the context have influenced the teacher's ways of seeing. Having tested my assertions and having shared them with the teacher, who felt that they resonated with her perspective, I offer the following summary and conclusions.

What Happened in this Setting to Promote the Acquisition of Literacy?

As was illustrated in the description and interpretation, students engaged in a variety of activities aimed at promoting the acquisition of literacy. Many of the activities were encouraged by the district which provided the teacher with materials and guidelines. These activities included reading from the basal reader, completing pages in the workbooks that accompanied the readers, taking tests at the end of each basal reader unit, engaging in silent reading each day, and reading the Scholastic News. Other activities appeared to be teacher-generated. They included taking turns to read aloud to the class from books the students selected; listening to story records which students brought from home; listening to stories read by the teacher or other students; participating in the home reading program; writing stories; and acting out stories from the basal reader or literature selected by the teacher.

How Does this Teacher Define Literacy?

At one level, the teacher defined literacy as a cognitive activity. Mrs. Gates' personal reading theory was a bottom-up theory that viewed literacy as the acquisition of a hierarchical set of basic skills learned in an incremental manner leading to decoding and comprehending text. The district-selected basal series, the district language arts objectives, and the time allotment guidelines reinforced this perspective and influenced the content, focus, and scheduling of the majority of reading activities. The teacher used the basal reader, the teaching guides, the student workbooks, and the unit tests as the foundation of the reading program. The unit tests together with the district language arts objectives and the district's concern with raising students' scores on standardized tests directed the teacher's attention to the cognitive aspects of reading.

On another level, Mrs. Gates defined literacy as a socially mediated activity which provided students with a way to interpret the world and to communciate about it with others. This view was shaped by her belief that what happened in school should be connected to the world in which the students lived; that school should make students feel good about themselves and should develop their potential; and that reading should empower students to lead a productive and meaningful life. Her own personal experiences in school, her definition of her role as a parent, and her personal theory of learning all seemed to influence this aspect of her definition of literacy. Acting out the legend; the manner in which the students interacted during the time they read the Scholastic News and shared their personal experience; the home reading program; the teacher's request that parents help their children work on reading vocabulary; and the period when students listened to and discussed the story records were all examples of activities that reflected Mrs. Gates' belief that reading was a socially mediated activity of importance in students' personal lives.

How Did This Teacher Come to Define Literacy in This Way?

From observing what the teacher taught, when she taught it, and how she taught it, it appeared that elements outside of her classroom as well as elements inside the classroom influenced how Mrs. Gates came to define literacy. These external and internal elements interacted to teach her what to teach, when to teach, and how to teach to promote the acquisition of literacy, as well as how to define it.

Have the Elements in the Context Taught the Teacher What to Teach, When to Teach It, and How to Teach It?

Elements from outside of her classroom such as the district's goal to raise students' math and reading scores on standardized tests, the language arts/reading objectives, the basal reading series and materials, and the weekly time allotment chart all appear to have influenced how Mrs. Gates looked at what and when to teach. She was aware of the district objectives, what would be tested on unit and standardized tests, and what skills were stressed for each reading level. In addition, she used the materials that the district provided for her, the basal readers, the workbooks, and the tests as the primary content for her literacy instruction. There was also evidence to show that Mrs. Gates organized instructional time according to the guidelines provided by the district. She was especially careful to allocate the required amount of time to district-sanctioned reading activities.

Elements inside of the classroom, the students' and her personal beliefs, appeared to have influenced her ways of seeing what, when, and especially how to deliver instruction. Mrs. Gates took her students' needs into account when she decided what to do to enhance the literacy activities sanctioned by the district. She believed that because most of her students were disadvantaged that she must do extras for them such as field trips, art projects, the home reading program, and acting out the legend. As a teacher, Mrs. Gates felt responsible for filling gaps that the students' parents could not fill. She looked at each child as an individual and tried to provide what that child needed. While individual needs varied and students' needs varied year to year, the teacher saw the need to connect school and home and to insure that all students had an opportunity to succeed as a constant. These beliefs about her students motivated her to develop activities and materials that expanded on the mandated curriculum. They influenced what she taught, how much time she gave to those activities, and how she carried out the instruction. For example, Mrs. Gates selected the legend which she and the students read to the class; she decided when to conduct the lesson and how much time to spend on it; and she decided that it would be "good for the students" to act it out, to tie the words to actions.

Mrs. Gates' ideas about what she should do for her students--get parents involved, tie school and home together, provide students with opportunities to succeed, show them that reading was fun and a way of seeing the world and communicating about it--also influenced what, when and how she taught. As she put it, "This is my room, and I'll decide how to organize it."

She used her own beliefs to guide her as she selected what to teach. When she saw that an activity was working, that "students had taken off," she used her own discretion to modify her lesson plans. Perhaps the greatest influence her own beliefs had were on how she delivered instruction. As I have noted, Mrs. Gates used the teacher's guides during reading instruction, but she was guided by her own theory of reading instruction in selecting which parts of the teaching guides to use. In addition, her ideas about what made learning interesting guided her in designing activities that made reading fun. She said, "I would get bored by just using the basal." In addition, her experience as a parent also appeared to influence how she taught. She mentioned that some children were developmentally behind others and cited her experience with her twins, a boy and a girl, to illustrate her theory of intellectual development.

Do Elements in the Context that Influence What, When and How the Teacher Teaches Remain Constant, or Do They Change Over Time?

The influence which the various elements had on the teacher's decision making varied. At times it appeared that Mrs. Gates was most influenced by district objectives, but at other times, it seemed that she was most influenced by her own beliefs or by the students' needs. Although she was most concerned with doing "what was good for kids," Mrs. Gates did not feel free to rely solely on her own beliefs to determine what, when, and how to teach. Frequently, there appeared to be a tension between what she believed should be done and her desire to fulfill what she perceived as the district's expectations. Her concern about spending too much time on the legend activity illustrates that tension.

Unanswered Questions

Certainly it is possible that there are many other elements that influenced how the teacher defined literacy and how she determined what, when, and how to teach it. It would be important to look more closely at the larger context in which the teacher taught. It would be helpful to analyze the tests her students were given to assess their achievement, to learn more about the staff development activities the district had provided for the teachers to prepare them to use the new basal series, to attend building and district meetings where school and district goals were discussed, to interview parents and administrators to learn what expectations they have passed on to teachers, and to explore contractual and state-mandated provisions that might influence the teacher.

In addition, it would be helpful to explore in more detail the specific context in which the teacher taught. It would be useful to learn more about individual students by looking at their permanent records and to learn more about classroom routines by visiting more frequently, by asking students what they make out of what is going on during instruction, and by learning more about the teacher in in-depth interviews about her personal and educational background, her view of her students, and her decision making.

Implications of This Research

While this paper did not set out to offer definitive answers to the questions it raised, it is possible to conclude that teachers' ways of seeing are influenced by elements outside of their classroom, as well as those within. The teachers' ways of seeing the action inside of the classroom--what, when, and how to teach literacy, for example--are influenced by an interaction among the external and internal elements.

This being the case, it seems important to learn more about what teachers think and about how their beliefs and experiences lead them to interact with guidelines and materials that those outside of the classroom expect them to use in their classrooms.

APPENDICES

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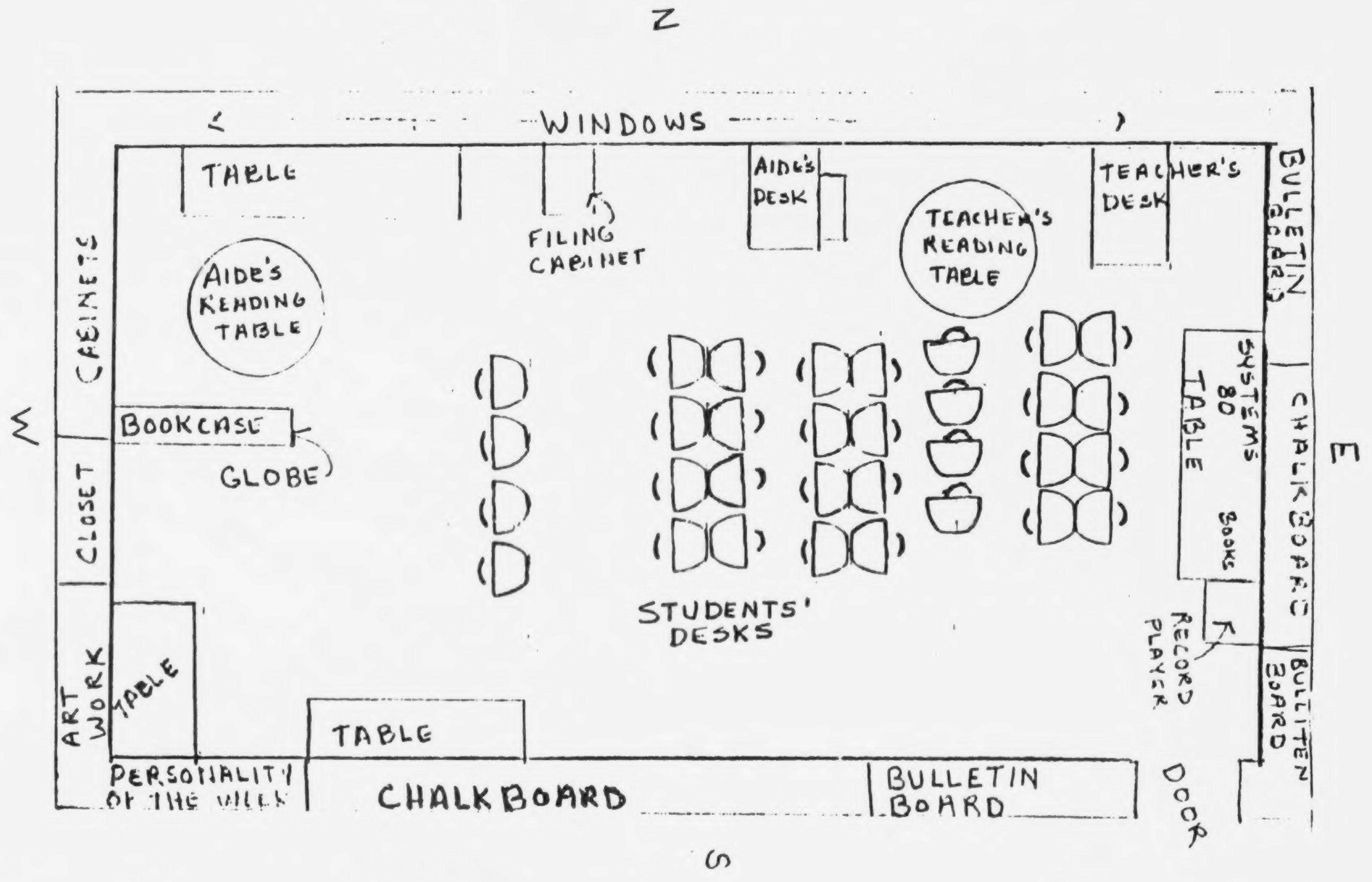
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WINDOWS
TABLE
FILING CABINET
AIDE'S DESK
TEACHER'S READING TABLE
TEACHER'S DESK
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AIDE'S READING TABLE
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CLOSET
SYSTEMS 80 TABLE
BOOKS
CHALKBOARD
E
STUDENTS' DESKS
RECORD PLAYER
BULLITEN BOARD
ART WORK
TABLE
TABLE
PERSONALITY OF THE WEEK
CHALKBOARD
BULLETIN BOARD
DOOR
S

Appendix B

Students in Mrs. Gates' second grade class during the course of study:

(Reading groups arranged from highest to lowest.)

Spinners : teacher's group

Renee

Towers : teacher's group

Andy - white male
Barb - white female
Betty - white female
Alice - white female (moved)
Kurt - white male (moved)

Moonbeams : aide's group

Jamal - black male (moved)
Nia - Asian female
Jerry - black male (retained from previous year)
Belinda - black female
Crystal - white female (moved into class)
Armando - Hispanic male (moved into class)

Sunshines : aide's group

Pham - Asian male
Donna - white female (retained from previous year)
Carlos - Hispanic male (teacher planned to retain)
Jeff - white male (retained from previous year)
Malcomb - black male
Thu - Asian female
Randy - white male (moved into class)

Sunshine : teacher's group

Josh - black male (teacher planned to retain)
Kim - black female
Annie - black female (moved)
Terri - black female
Laura - white female
*Martin - black male (from another teacher's class)
*Nancy - black female (from another teacher's class)

*Joined the class for reading only. Two other students spend most of the day in the special education classroom.

Chapter 5

CASE STUDY OF MR. FAIRLEY:
SEEING AND MAKING SENSE OF STUDENT TYPES OVER TIME AND SETTINGS

This case study describes how one experienced second grade teacher saw and made sense of students and how his ways of seeing changed from one year to the next when the school setting and district expectations changed. The chapter is divided into two sections; Mr. Fairley Year Two and Mr. Fairley Year One. In both sections identity types and their construction are discussed.

Catherine Pelissier

CASE STUDY OF MR. FAIRLEY:
SEEING AND MAKING SENSE OF STUDENT TYPES
OVER TIME AND SETTINGS

Introduction

After a particularly hectic day, Mr. Fairley, the teacher on whom this paper will focus, said that when you have 25 students in a classroom, you have 25 different ways of learning. Yet the practical press of day-to-day life in the classroom leaves little opportunity for teachers to create and implement a separate program for each child that takes full account of her/his background, needs, and proclivities. Confronted with this constraint, teachers must somehow find a way to teach more than one child at a time. As Mr. Fairley put it, in a letter that he wrote to parents at the beginning of the school year,

> There are few challenges as great as taking twenty-five students, each with different strengths and weaknesses, and forging them into a cohesive, disciplined and motivated group of learners for whom the pursuit of excellent academic standards becomes a primary goal in their young lives. (8/29/84)

Frederick Erickson, the coordinator of the project of which this study is a part, put it another way:

> . . . teachers' practical ways of seeing can be thought of as active processes of construction rather than passive processes of reception. Classroom activities are tremendously complex, often involving rapid-paced interaction that is organized hierarchically at many levels simultaneously. This presents problems of information overload for observers, whether they are detached outsiders or are teachers or students in the scene attempting to be observant participants. There is just too much happening to be seen and heard totally, let alone be reflected on. (Original - E 4.6)

Confronted with the reality and chaos of 25 or so odd individuals, then, teachers must somehow "simplify" their situation and, by chunking pieces of information together, make connections between students and between events. Ability groupings in reading or math provide commonly known examples of this kind of chunking. Based on such evidence as test scores, verbal articulation, and attention span, children in a classroom are separated into groups representing different levels of ability. The children in any group are not the same, but they are similar enough to allow the teacher to interact with them on the same level. This greatly simplifies the teacher's task; rather than having to write 25 lesson plans, she/he need only write three or four. This is complex enough.

But there is more going on in a classroom than reading and math, and even during reading group sessions or math lessons, there is more going on than the decoding of words or computations. Classrooms are learning environments, social scenes. There are numerous events happening--events which include not only reading, writing, math and social studies, but also recess, lunch, rainy days and the forging and breaking of friendships. There are also numerous ways of participating in these events, of talking about math or reading, of dealing with rainy days. And again, connections must be made; teachers, like everyone else, "partition their environment into categories for establishing equivalence among objects and events" (Mehan 1982: 298).

It seems reasonable to assume, then, that teachers chunk together certain kinds of readers, and also, at a more general level, certain kinds of students and people. Jane is not only a reader with such-and-such strengths and weaknesses; she is also a math student who has an easy or difficult time with division, a student who is shy or outspoken, who breaks rules or keeps them, who needs attention or is independent, etc. Together, these different characteristics make up the configuration of Jane-as-this-kind-of-person. And Jane-as-this-kind-of student is similar to some of the other students in the class, while different from others.

First, however, these characteristics must be perceived. ["Teacher's practical ways of seeing can be thought of as active processes of construction rather than passive processes of reception" (FE)]. It is the teacher who, by means of her/his interaction with her/his students, works to make salient certain events or personalities and not others--to somehow simplify the overwhelming complexity of these events and personalities so that the day-to-day happenings of the classroom may get done.

How teachers perceive, then, how they see and make sense of the events and behaviors in their classroom, is highly relevant to questions concerning the success or failure of various students.

The focus of this paper will be on how one teacher saw and made sense of one set of students. Emphasis will be placed on the general level of student types alluded to above. Among the questions to be considered will be the following:

1) What was the range of identity types in Mr. Fairley's classroom?

2) On what bases were these identity types constructed?
   a) What were the defining features of each type?
   b) What were the dimensions of contrast between the types?

Background Puzzle

Before providing a general overview of the setting and a detailed description of the identity types, it would seem useful to briefly outline the way in which the above questions emerged from the research process. My interest in how Mr. Fairley categorized his students began with the shared interest and concern Mr. Fairley and I had for one student, Shane. Shane was a problem student--the problem student of the year. His difficulties ranged from low academic skills to poor work habits to problems in getting along with others. As I became engrossed in Mr. Fairley's dilemma, I began to puzzle over exactly what it was that made Shane a problem student. What was it about him that initially led Mr. Fairley to focus on him as a potential problem? What were the boundaries of his problemness? What attributes, or behaviors, were perceived and defined by Mr. Fairley as problem-like?

As I puzzled over these questions, I began to realize that in order to understand Shane's problemness, I had to understand it in relation to other students' problemness, or lack thereof. Mr. Fairley and Shane did not interact in isolation, but in a room in which 24 other children also spent 6 hours of each day. It seemed evident that how Mr. Fairley perceived and made sense of Shane was inextricably connected with how he perceived and made sense of his other students, a contention which is borne out by the way in which Mr. Fairley compared and contrasted students in conversation. In order to understand one piece of the puzzle, then, the entire puzzle needed to be put together.

In this way, the questions regarding Shane were transformed and expanded into the larger and more general questions outlined above.

Overview of Study and Methodology

The research to be reported here is part of a larger project, consisting of 4 case-studies of experienced elementary school teachers, conducted by 5 researchers. The project, "Teachers Practical Ways of Seeing," has as its goal the gaining of insight into and an understanding of the ways in which teachers see and make sense of what happens in their classrooms from day to day. Some of the beginning questions of the research were as follows: 1) How do teachers make sense of what happens in their classrooms? 2) How does teachers' sense-making change across years and from year-to-year? 3) How do the backgrounds and experiences of different teachers influence their perceptions and interpretations? 4) How does teachers' sense-making, as insiders actively (and centrally) engaged in classroom activity, differ from the sense-making of researchers as outsiders? Specific questions and directions for focused research on these questions were to emerge from the research process itself.

The study to be reported here was based on an intensive, year-long participant observation study of a 2nd grade, elementary school classroom. In addition to the year-long participant observation study, I also spent five months with the same teacher during the previous year.

The methodology employed was participant observation. Sixty-three half-day visits were made to the classroom across the school year. During the visits, running observational notes were taken, which were then typed up in detail after each visit. Informal conversations with the teacher, which took place before and after school, during transitions between activities and occasionally on the spot, in the middle of an activity, were also recorded. Additionally, I interviewed the teacher on 9 occasions, twice during the 1st half of the year, 5 times during the 2nd half of the year, once during the following summer, and once during the following fall. Finally, 30 hours of video-tape were recorded, covering both whole class and small group activities at different points in the year.

Every effort was made to include the teacher in the research process. Mr. Fairley was seen not as an object of study, but as a collaborator. As such, he worked with me to select specific questions for focused research, and additionally read and commented on my reports. He has read and commented on the description and interpretation to be presented here, and it has accordingly been modified to accommodate his criticisms. Mr. Fairley's role as an observant participant has proven to be invaluable to the project.

Overview of the Setting

Elm St. School is located in a mid-sized city in the midwest. The city houses the state capital and some heavy industry, and is adjacent to a smaller city which houses a large state university.

Elm St. School serves approximately 400 children in grades K-5. Although seemingly a neighborhood school, located in a primarily white, middle-class section of town, Elm St. School serves children from a variety of ethnic and class backgrounds. This diversity is due primarily to a recent collapsing into Elm St. School of the student bodies from two other schools, as part of a district-wide program of closing down unneeded schools, and to busing.

Mr. Fairley taught 2nd grade in Room 1 at Elm St. School. The room was a large one, and consisted of what would be considered two separate sections. The students and teacher had their desks in the front section of the room and most whole group lessons occurred there. The location of other activities, however, changed at different points during the year. Although most playing materials were located in the back section of the room, free-time sometimes took place in that section, and sometimes in the front section. Less frequent changes were made in the location of the reading group area, which was placed in 5 separate locations across the year. The location of work tables, the rug area (used for play and story time), the computer, and bookshelves--as well as the seating arrangement of the children also changed.

These frequent changes in the location of key activities reflected in part Mr. Fairley's tastes (he enjoyed a change of scene), but it also seemed to reflect his concern with management issues. As the year progressed, Mr. Fairley experienced more and more difficulty with certain students (to be referred to as the chronic behavior problem students). The movement of such key activities--in particular, the movement of the reading group area--may have indicated an attempt on his part to position himself so as to retain as much control over the class as was possible.

Several other factors point to the 1983-84 school year as a stressful one for Mr. Fairley. After 7 years of teaching at the same school, Mr. Fairley was transferred to Elm St. School. This move had a great deal of influence on how his school year began. Aside from the obvious changes in building, classroom, co-teachers and principal, Mr. Fairley was confronted with an almost entirely new group of students (since part of the student body from his previous school was also moved to Elm St., he knew some of the students). This was very unusual for Mr. Fairley. While at his previous school, Mr. Fairley was able to begin developing relationships with his incoming students while they were still in the 1st grade. During the preceding summer, he attempted to see his new students once or twice, and also exchanged letters with them. In addition, many of his new students were the younger sisters and brothers of his previous students; thus Mr. Fairley had already had occasion to develop relationships with the parents. The end result of this was that when the school year began, Mr. Fairley was familiar with almost all of his new students, and the students, for their part, were somewhat familiar with Mr. Fairley and with what would be expected of them as students. The difficulties involved in trying to get to know students on an individual basis while simultaneously trying to set up the classroom as a group were thereby lessened.

With the move to Elm St. School, Mr. Fairley lost the opportunity to do this kind of preparatory work. Since he had been accustomed to beginning each year with prior knowledge of (and relationships with) each of his students, it is reasonable to assume that beginning the year with knowledge of only a small number of his students was stressful for him. Moreover, not only was he confronted with mostly "new" students, he was also confronted with new types of students. As he stated in an interview on the last day of school,

> I think I learned more this year than I learned in any other year of my teaching. Or, at least more than I learned last year. This year has been a very difficult year. I've seen a lot of things in children that I haven't seen other years. I'm realizing that you have to be prepared for those kinds of things, more than just the great academic student and the kid who goofs around a little bit. You've got to be prepared for kids with some real emotional needs. (6/13/84)

A final factor which contributed to the stress of the year was a district-wide change in the reading program. Mr. Fairley had been very well acquainted with the old program. His extensive knowledge of the stories and of the sequence of skills to be learned had allowed him, during previous years, to focus most of his attention on the students as opposed to the teachers' manual. It also provided room for departures and tangents, since he could build on the stories and bring in additional information. With the implementation of a new reading program, however, Mr. Fairley was overwhelmed with new stories, new workbooks, new methods for teaching skills, and new tests. This was particularly burdensome during the 1st half of the year, and Mr. Fairley complained about the number of worksheets and tests (9/16/83, 10/12/83), and about his inability to "take off" from the stories (11/23/83).

Overview of Teacher and Students

Mr. Fairley is a white male in his mid-30's. He is the eldest of 6 children from a working class family, and was brought up on the East Coast. Mr. Fairley came to Midwest City to attend the State University, where he completed both a B.A. and an M.A., and he has remained in Midwest City ever since.

Mr. Fairley's reasons for entering the teaching profession were originally highly tied to his family background. Mr. Fairley's father went through several periods of unemployment and, although he was a musician, most of his paid work was in factories. As a result, Mr. Fairley wanted a steady job with predictable pay (fieldnote notes 5/83). This original reason for teaching, however, was soon superseded by the rewards inherent to teaching itself. Mr. Fairley loves his job and has repeatedly stated that he could think of no other job that he would enjoy more.

Mr. Fairley has been teaching for 10 years. Most of those years have been spent in the 2nd grade. He is an extremely conscientious and devoted teacher, arriving at school between 7:00 and 7:30 a.m. and often remaining there until 5:00 p.m.. He as often as not takes work home with him in the evenings. Despite his working class background, Mr. Fairley sees himself as middle class, and he claims that the values instilled in him as a child were those of the middle classes. These values include, among others, family stability, stretching the dollar, respect for property and authority, self-discipline, hard work, and an emphasis on the value of a good education (interview, 5/4/84). These values are important to Mr. Fairley, and he works hard to encourage and instill them in his students.

The goal of teaching for Mr. Fairley was pointed to in the introduction: his aim is to get students to be motivated and disciplined learners "for whom the pursuit of excellent academic standards becomes a primary goal" (8/29/84). Over and above the learning of specific skills, Mr. Fairley is interested in instilling in his students an inquisitiveness and curiosity about the world, and in encouraging in them what he refers to as "scholarly" attitudes. The sign over the chalkboard at the front of the room does not read "Learn to Read," but rather, "Read to Learn." Going beyond the designated curricula to explore new realms of knowledge--what he referred to as getting into "extras"--is perhaps the overarching theme in Mr. Fairley's philosophy of teaching. If the student has the inquisitiveness, and if she/he is self-disciplined and scholarly in her/his approach to school-work, the skills (such as phonics, division, telling time) will come of their own accord. Looking and thinking are the really important matters.

The constraints discussed in the previous section (overview of setting) served to mitigate against the implementation of this philosophy to a degree satisfactory to Mr. Fairley. Despite the constraints of a new reading program, and of discipline problems, however, Mr. Fairley tried to encourage "extras" as much as was feasible. Although not as frequently as during the previous year, he tried, whenever possible, to encourage "taking off" from stories during reading group sessions, and he very rarely (though more often than during the previous year) discouraged tangents when students chose to initiate them.

During the year of this study, Mr. Fairley had a total of 24 students. Only 21 of these students were in Mr. Fairley's class for the entire year. These 21 children will form the basis of this report.

Of the 21 children who were a part of Mr. Fairley's class throughout the school year, 8 were girls and 13 were boys. The ethnic breakdown of the class was as follows: 4 Black (girls), 1 Hispanic (boy), 1 Laotian (boy), and 15 White (4 girls, 11 boys). Two measures were used to determine class background, economic standing and life-style. Both "measures" were a reflection of Mr. Fairley's knowledge and perceptions. I did not have access to information on the family incomes of the students; however, Mr. Fairley informed me that 5 of the children came from relatively poor families (Jonny, Shane, Jarrod, Phi, Crystal, Jason). What this meant was that these families did not have money for "luxuries," and that the children were occasionally in need of new clothing (interview 5/4/84). My own observations of the children's outward appearance corroborated Mr. Fairley's perceptions.

The 2nd "measure" of class background was that of life-style. For this measure I relied entirely on Mr. Fairley's criterion, since they were what was at issue in this study. Here I found that he stressed life-style and values as markers of class difference. Thus, whether or not a student seemed to believe in and live out what he considered to be middle-class values--family stability, respect for money, property and authority, self-discipline and hard work, and the importance of education (interview, 5/4/84, see p. above)--determined her/his class position. According to this measure, only 2 of the children in the class were lower class - Shane and Jarrod. (See section on Chronic Behavior Problem Students below).

Identity Types

The identity types to be described in this section were not named or described by Mr. Fairley in the manner presented here. In other words, the names, attributes of, and dimensions of contrast between the identity types were not simply described to me by Mr. Fairley and then set down verbatim. Rather, the names of the types were my own invention. Their contents--the major attributes and the dimensions of contrast between them--were inferred from the way in which Mr. Fairley talked about and interacted with the students in his classroom. The way in which these types were constructed therefore warrants some description and explanation.

As I observed in Mr. Fairley's classroom across the year, it became evident that he grouped certain children together on the basis of some attributes, and other children together on the basis of other attributes. As Mr. Fairley said, when speaking of the vast amount of input a teacher must process:

> I guess the only way you can separate them and keep on top of the information--the input that comes in--is to put them in groups and categorize them and draw conclusions from them . . . That process goes on all the time and hopefully

> it is refined over the years; so some of the things, the conclusions that I reach, are based on experience with other children in other classes. (interview 4/2/84).

This grouping, or categorizing, however, is not always explicit. Although a teacher may make connections or contrasts between children in her/his informal talk, or enact these connections and contrasts in her/his interaction with students, the connections and contrasts are not necessarily in conscious awareness.

This was made evident when Mr. Fairley and I worked together on a symposium on teacher-researcher collaboration. We chose as our focus issues surrounding the ways in which Mr. Fairley made decisions about which children in his class to retain. In particular, our focus was on Mr. Fairley's concept of "immaturity," since "immaturity" was one of the major reasons, in his view, for retaining a child. During the course of our collaboration on this topic, it became clear to both of us that Mr. Fairley had not just one, but three, definitions of "immaturity." The result of our collaboration, then, was the articulation of these different types, or levels, of "immaturity." The emphasis here is on articulation, rather than discovery (for Mr. Fairley). As Mr. Fairley put it in his symposium statement:

> In previous years, I more or less intuitively knew after a while whether or not I was going to retain a particular child. My conversations with Catherine this year have helped me to examine and question these intuitions, and to make them more explicit. For example, when Catherine asked me what I meant when I referred to certain children as "immature," I was able for the first time to articulate different levels of immaturity. Although I am sure that this information was there, it was not explicitly present, and I was not able to put it into words. Since there are so many facets to the complex issue of retention, being able to divide it into its component parts has made the issue easier to understand. (AERA Statement, 1984, p. 3.)

A similar argument may be made with respect to the identity types to be presented here. It is my contention that the types are Mr. Fairley's types, and that the attributes of and dimensions of contrast between the types reflect Mr. Fairley's perceptions. Evidence for this has been provided by Mr. Fairley himself, who, upon reading this paper, found that the categories and their defining qualities fit in with his own sense-making of the children in his class. My role as a researcher, then, has been to make these types and their contents explicit.

The process used to make these types and their qualities explicit has been that of inference. Of primary importance was the way in which Mr. Fairley talked about his students during informal conversations and interviews; here, emphasis was placed on the ways in which he grouped together or differentiated between the different students in his class. Two examples will serve to illustrate this process.

1) When discussing one problem student, Pat M, Mr. Fairley made the following statement:

> . . . he doesn't seem all that interested in astronomy or . . . anything in particular. I don't see him having . . . interest in those . . . shark books. I see David and Phi and Pat and Jeremy and Michael and Josh - just about every boy in the class interested in them, except for Shane and Jarrod. But Pat, who has all the intellectual abilities, doesn't seem all that interested in them. (interview, 12/15/83).

In this statement, Mr. Fairley is making a distinction between Pat M, Shane and Jarrod, and the rest of the boys in his class on the basis of the kinds of interests they pursue. He is also making a similar distinction between boys and girls. In short, he is grouping together and separating children on the basis of what are to him salient attributes or characteristics.

2) A similar process may be observed in the following:

> Nedra can be a really little pain in the rear end. And so can Tamika, and so can Margie, and so can Crystal, and so can Tonya - at any one time. And yet, I have no bad thoughts about them. I think they're awfully nice little kids--they're kids being kids when they misbehave. Because they all have learned a great deal this year. They all have done good work. They all treat me awfully nice, and . . . when I'm being very serious with them, they seem to rise to the occasion. (interview 5/4/84)

Here Mr. Fairley is grouping together Nedra, Tamika, Margie, Crystal and Tonya based on the ways in which they misbehave and interact with Mr. Fairley. As I will show in more detail later, Mr. Fairley, in making this kind of statement, draws an implicit distinction between the ways girls and boys misbehave.

It was this kind of statement, coupled with the in-class interaction of teacher and students, that formed the basis for the construction of the identity types I will present in this section. Accordingly, quotes from interviews and narrative vignettes of classroom interaction will be used extensively throughout the text.

Before proceeding, however, note must be taken of the difficulties involved in speaking of sets of attributes and of dimensions of contrast between them. The major danger involved in speaking in such terms is that the sets, or types, are abstracted and static--they provide a textureless picture of what in actuality are fluid phenomena, with permeable rather than closed boundaries. Teachers work to make sense of children, not of objects; thus the categories and the lines between categories cannot be absolute or fixed.

If we remember this--if one continually thinks in terms of fluidity, of day-to-day construction and reconstruction, and of real people rather than repositories for attributes--an analysis in terms of sets of attributes and dimensions of contrast between sets of attributes can be useful. Specifically, such an analysis is useful in providing a generalized model of the identity types, of the basic foundations of each identity type, and of the most generalized bases for distinguishing between the types. Although the fit among and divisions between groups of students were neither precise nor definite, there were nevertheless groups of children who were seen by Mr. Fairley as having more in common among themselves than with other groups of children. Such children, then, were grouped together by him on the basis of such similarities, or resemblances, and simultaneously distinguished from other children on the basis of dissimilarities. What were considered to be the similarities and differences is what is at question here.

Overview

The 21 children who form the basis of this report were separated by Mr. Fairley into the following 6 identity types:

1) The model student. Two boys, Josh and Scott, made up the category of model student. Josh and Scott were valued by Mr. Fairley for their intelligence, their high levels of productivity, their exemplary classroom behavior, and finally, for their interest in and pursuit of areas of knowledge other than those

included in the curriculum. In every respect, Josh and Scott were at the top of their class.

2) The above average student. The above average student group was made up of 4 students, Jeremy, Jonny, Becky, and Pat M. All 4 students were considered by Mr. Fairley to be very intelligent. Their defining characteristic as a group, however, was that they did not live up to their intelligence--that they were, in certain respects, lazy. Unlike the model students, the above-average students failed to make full use of their abilities.

3) The chronic behavior problem group. This group was made up of one above average student, Pat M, and two other students, Shane and Jarrod. The defining characteristic of this group of students was that they did not produce good work and that they misbehaved consistently across all situations. In many respects, the chronic behavior problem type was the opposite of the model student type.

4) The academic problem group. The academic problem group was made up of two boys from the chronic behavior problem group, Shane and Jarrod, plus 3 other boys, Pat S, Chris and Phi, and 2 girls, Margie and Tonya. As a group, these students were known for the difficulties they had with the academic tasks presented to them by Mr. Fairley. Although they all had problems with their school work, the reasons for their poor performance were attributed by Mr. Fairley to different causes; thus, based on cause, they were divided into the following sub-group: 1) behavior problem--Shane and Jarrod; 2) immaturity - Pat S, and Chris;[1] and; 3) learning disability - Margie and Tonya.

5) The episodic behavior problem group. This group was made up of the two girls from the academic problem group, Margie and Tonya, plus 3 other girls, Nedra, Crystal and Tamika. Although all 5 girls were generally well-behaved, they each tended to go through periodic bouts of misbehavior. These bouts lasted from anywhere between one day to several weeks. In many ways, the episodic behavior problems of this group of students contrasted with the consistent, never-ending behavior problems of the students in the chronic behavior problem group.

6) The average student group. This last group was made up of 3 students from the episodic behavior problem group, Nedra, Crystal and Tamika, plus 2 other girls, Stephanie and Jill, and 3 boys, Jason, David K., and Michael. Aside from the episodic misbehavior of Nedra, Crystal and Tamika, they were best known, along with the other children in thisgroup, for their "normality." None of the 8 students demonstrated exceptional strengths or weaknesses; rather, they were seen by Mr. Fairley as normal, average students.

A Note on Overlap and Fluidity

It is evident from the above description that the identity types are not mutually exclusive. Rather, there seems to be a great deal of overlap between the groups. Pat M was a member of both the above average and the chronic behavior problem groups; Shane and Jarrod were members of both the chronic behavior problem and the academic problem groups; Margie and Tonya were academic problem students as well as episodic behavior problem students;

and finally, Tamika, Crystal and Nedra were members of both the episodic problem group and the average group. The model student group was the only group that did not overlap with any of the other groups.

This overlap between groups provides a sense of the fluidity of Mr. Fairley's perceptions across the year and in different contexts. Again, since Mr. Fairley was working to make sense of individuals and not objects, the lines between the categories were not fixed. Although some students could fit easily into one category, others did not, having instead qualities or characteristics which fit into two categories. The context of Mr. Fairley's perceptions changed as well. For instance, when Tamika, Crystal and Nedra misbehaved, they were seen by Mr. Fairley as problem students; the rest of the time, however, they were perceived as average students. Finally, it should be noted that none of the students exhibited all the attributes characteristic of their "type" at all times, but rather fluctuated in their model-ness or problem-ness, etc., across the year and in different contexts.

The model presented here, then, is a generalized model, which cannot detail, but only point to and indicate, fluidity in student behavior and in Mr. Fairley's perception of that behavior.

Identity Types

The Model Student (Josh, Scott). During our first formal interview of the year, Mr. Fairley made the following statements about the two model students in his classroom:

> "(Scott) is everybody's idea of what a perfect little student ought to be. He's kind and caring and well-behaved and very

> intelligent. I'm looking for great things. I've used him often as a role model in the class because he really knows exactly why he's here. I've looked at his report from last year. The teacher said the same thing--a delightful little boy to have." (interview 9/21/83)
>
> "(Josh) forms that little core of kids that right now they do exactly what I want. They are exactly (what you) want in a student. You don't need to do any molding or shaping or convincing of a different way." (interview 9/21/83)

This kind of positive view of Josh and Scott was held by Mr. Fairley throughout the school year. From the beginning, the two boys were at the top of their class, and served as the norm against which all the students' behaviors (social and academic) were measured.

On a general level, the most notable feature of Mr. Fairley's view of these two model students was that he considered all their characteristics or attributes to be positive, and conversely, saw few as negative or detrimental.[2] Thus Josh and Scott were seen as having good work habits (working hard, completing assignments correctly), good relationships with their peers (being friendly and caring about others), good behavior patterns (behaving properly and appropriately, attending to the teacher), and, perhaps most important, what I have called positive personality traits (i.e., general traits that influence work habits, behavior patterns, etc., but are not restricted to them), including high ability, curiosity, and an enthusiasm for learning.

Josh and Scott, then, were in a sense the prototype "good" students in Mr. Fairley's class. Mr. Fairley never had to worry about their social behaviors, and their work habits were so good that he rarely felt the need to keep tabs on them:

> . . . if I see him (Josh) looking around the room about 10 o'clock, I never say, "Josh, is your work done?" because I know it will be done, and if it isn't finished now, it will be when it's expected. (interview 3/6/84)

Indeed, the quality of the work they produced was such that Mr. Fairley often used their papers as answer sheets when correcting other students' work:

> I check Scott's and Josh's papers first because they generally have theirs right and I'll set my answers and their two papers out together and I'll check, and if theirs don't agree with mine I'll check and see if I had it wrong because they quite often have theirs right . . . (interview 3/6/84).

In Mr. Fairley's view, Josh and Scott were both motivated and responsible, and thus they possessed from the outset traits which Mr. Fairley hoped to instill in all his students (interview 3/6/84).

The model student, however, was not just someone who was responsible and good at following orders. Specifically, the model student was characterized as someone who is very intelligent, who produces a lot of work, who knows a lot (meaning knows things that one would not necessarily expect a second grader to know), and who has "extra" interests which he[3] actively pursues (i.e., interests in areas outside of and beyond the standard second grade curriculum). The attributes "knows a lot" and "into extras" (has and pursues extra interests) were crucial defining attributes of the model student, and served to distinguish him from all the other students in the classroom. These attributes were considered important both in and of themselves and in terms of their influence on the child's performance of routine tasks:

> (Josh and Scott) seem to enjoy reading and finding out new information. And they're interested in a lot of things, and I

> think that also helps your reading ability improve. (interview 12/15/83)

An example of what "knows a lot" and "into extras" entailed is provided in the following vignette, in which Mr. Fairley and Scott have a discussion about planets:

> It was early in the morning and official school time was about to begin. Mr. Fairley turned off the lights as a signal to the children who were milling around that they should return to their seats for attendance. After a moment, Mr. Fairley turned the light back on and then stood in the center of the room, waiting for the children to respond to the signal. As he glanced around the room to see who was and who wasn't seated, Scott caught his eye by holding up a book on Mars that he had recently gotten out of the library. Mr. Fairley responded by asking, "You know most planets are named after gods?" Scott nodded yes, and then put the book down on his desk again.
>
> After being interrupted by a member of the office staff and stepping out into the hallway for a moment, Mr. Fairley returned to the center of the room and began explaining to Scott, who had been leafing through the book, that Mars was named after the god of war, because of its red color. Scott listened to Mr. Fairley in rapt attention, and then nodded.
>
> Again the conversation was cut short as Mr. Fairley seized an opportunity to take attendance (i.e., the children were all in their seats). As soon as he had finished taking attendance, however, Mr. Fairley again turned to Scott (who had continued to leaf through the book), and told him that he would be able to learn more about the origins of the planet names when the class started their work on astronomy. Scott responded by saying that "some people even worshipped them" (the gods after which the planets were named). Mr. Fairley nodded yes, explained that many people worshipped many gods instead of one, and then went on to list all the god-names of the planets. The conversation was then abruptly cut off as Mr. Fairley called for the class' attention and officially started the school day. (fieldnotes, 11/30/83)

It is evident from this vignette that Scott "knows a lot"--he had read part of the book and thus knew something about both the origins of the planet names and the ways in which people related to their gods. The vignette further demonstrates that Scott had "extra" interests and that he actively pursued those interests: he was interested in Mars and the other planets, had checked the book out of the library, had obviously read at least part of it, and was working at initiating a conversation with Mr. Fairley on the topic.

Finally, the vignette illustrates the high value placed by Mr. Fairley on having and pursuing "extra" interests. The time before the official start of the school day was usually hectic. Children were wandering around the room and talking (this was *their* time), and Mr. Fairley was often occupied with tasks such as receiving and handing out notes, answering questions, greeting children, or responding to inquiries from office personnel. Despite the numerous demands being made on his attention, however, it is clear in the vignette that Mr. Fairley saw to it that his discussion with Scott was able to continue.[4]

Josh and Scott, then, were model students not only because they fulfilled every requirement (academic and behavioral) for being considered "good" students in Mr. Fairley's classroom, but also because they went *beyond* those requirements to enter the realm of "extras." It was this *combination* of behaviors--doing one's work, listening to the teacher, being nice to others, following the rules for good behavior, having ability and using it, *and* going beyond what was expected to inquire into subjects introduced in class--that made Josh and Scott model students.

The Above Average Student

Just as going beyond the routine requirements for being a "good" student in Mr. Fairley's class was the distinguishing characteristic of the model student, a refusal to either fulfill and/or go beyond them, despite one's ability to do so, was perhaps the major limitation of the above average student. Mr. Fairley noticed this quality in Becky and Jeremy very early in the school year:

> Becky and Jeremy are good students, but they don't do half the quantity of work or the quality. Jeremy is a very bright boy. He may be the smartest kid in this class in the things he knows, but you don't really get much participation from him. (interview 9/21/83)

Jonny and Pat M., the remaining two above average students, behaved in similar ways. What was shared by all four students, then, from Mr. Fairley's perspective, was high intelligence and a tendency to avoid work.

As stated, this tendency to avoid work took the form of either not finishing or not going beyond routine assignments. During the earlier part of the school year both Becky and Jeremy displayed a proclivity for avoiding routine assignments. The following vignette suggests that the avoidance of work was coupled with what looked like a lack of motivation and interest.

> Reading group 1 members (the highest group) were to have read a story and written out answers to a set of questions. When the group members came together for their daily meeting, their goal was to go over the students' written responses to Mr. Fairley's questions. Accordingly, when the group members were settled in the reading area, Mr. Fairley informed them that he wanted them to read their answers out loud to the group.
>
> Upon hearing this request, Becky immediately informed Mr. Fairley that she had not had the time to finish writing her answers because the class had gone to recess. When Mr. Fairley asked Becky what she did after recess, she mumbled something about how the paper was in her desk, meaning, perhaps, that she had forgotten about it. Replying in a sarcastic tone, "come on," Mr. Fairley went on to ask Becky to read her first answer. Although she provided an answer to the question, she did not read it from her paper, and when

> asked where her paper was, she replied simply that she had left it in her desk (Mr. Fairley had instructed the group members to bring their papers with them to the meeting.).
>
> Later in the meeting, after having asked several other children to read their responses, Mr. Fairley asked Jeremy to read one of his answers. In response, Jeremy told Mr. Fairley that he hadn't read the entire story. After the group meeting, Mr. Fairley had a private talk with both Becky and Jeremy about getting their work done. (fieldnotes 9/21/83)

In addition to feeling that these students lacked motivation and interest, Mr. Fairley also saw them as somewhat lazy. Such laziness was most evident in the behaviors of Becky and Pat M.[6] Becky's was all the more noticeable because it often took the form of continually asking for a lot of help on assignments that Mr. Fairley felt were were well within her capabilities.

Although my role as participant observer included helping students with their seatwork while Mr. Fairley was meeting with reading groups, I, too, was often frustrated by Becky's questions when it seemed evident that she was asking for help before she needed it. For instance, I recall one occasion when, having arrived late, Becky stopped me as I walked past her desk. When I turned to respond to her, she opened an SRA booklet and told me that she didn't understand how to do the exercises. (fieldnotes, 6/4/84). On an earlier occasion, I made the following notation in my fieldnote notes after a conversation with Mr. Fairley about Becky's "playing dumb":

> T (Mr. Fairley) said that she has a tendency to do that. She knows what she needs to know to do SRA's, etc. but just gets lazy sometimes. (fieldnote notes, 3/26/84) 6

Again, it is important to remember that Becky's numerous questions were considered to be (and were often proven by her to be) unnecessary:

> When you finally tell Becky, "I'm sorry, I'm not answering another question for you," then she'll go back (to her seat) and get the answers right. . . . she uses a lot of people around her to get help, but she really doesn't need it. Because she's a little lazy. (interview 6/13/84)

As stated above, however, besides not completing assignments they were considered capable of completing, this group also shared another negative attribute--an unwillingness to go beyond routine tasks to pursue "extra" interests. Jonny, for instance, was not interested in applying his skills in reading to learn (instead of just learning to read):

> . . . it hasn't occurred to him that maybe there are other things to do with reading. I mean, to Jonny, reading is just, "Well, if you can read the words you can read." (interview 12/15/83)

The emphasis here is on ability; Jonny, along with his fellow above-average students, had the ability to go beyond routine tasks, but chose not to. Indeed, in many ways Mr. Fairley considered the above-average students to be as capable and intelligent as the model student; he thought, for instance, that Pat M. and Jeremy were even smarter than Josh and Scott:

> I do know that Scott and Josh can't keep up with Pat and Jeremy when it comes to thinking skills and understanding what they're reading. (interview 6/13/84)

The difference between the two groups was that the model students mentally stretched themselves, so to speak, while the above average-students seemed content to remain where they were.

The above-average students, then, contrasted with the model students insofar as they possessed all the endowments of the model student, (in certain cases, even more) but refused to use them. They also contrasted with the less able members of Mr. Fairley's class, who, despite their limits, worked hard to reach and even surpass those limits. The above average students were thus measured not only against themselves, but also against the other students in the class. In Mr. Fairley's judgement, they fell short of realizing their potential.

The Chronic Behavior Problem Student. One of the above-average students, Pat M., fell so short of what he was capable of so consistently across the year, and exhibited such defiant and disruptive behavior, that he fell not only into the category of "above-average student," but also into that of "chronic behavior problem student." This combination of characteristics is aptly described in the following statement made by Mr. Fairley in discussing his frustration with Pat:

> . . . he doesn't do that much work. I think . . . he's a bright little boy. I have lots of really interesting reading material that he could work through on those SRA's. It's not a lot of written work, it's a lot of thinking work. And, you know . . . if Pat would just say to me, "Listen, I brought in all these books on sharks or car racing and I'd like to do a little report on them," well, right away I'd say yes. But that isn't what Pat says . . . He comes in and wants to do nothing and wants to bother everybody around him. And we have a difficult time when he does that. And . . . you know, he also is a little boy that I'm sure we could do a lot more academic type things with. He doesn't have much of an attention span. You know, he doesn't seem all that interested in astronomy or . . . anything in particular. I don't see him having . . . interest in those . . . shark books. I see David and Phi and Pat and Jeremy and Michael and Josh -- just about every other boy in the class[7] -- interested in them, except for Shane and Jarrod.[8] But Pat, who has all the intellectual abilities, doesn't seem all that interested in them. And I can't quite figure out why . . . I know he's immature, but I'm not sure that's a complete excuse. I mean, my goodness, there are kindergarteners that act better than Pat does. (interview 12/15/83)

Although high intelligence was not an attribute shared by the other two chronic problem students in the class (Shane and

Jarrod), all three students were seen as not working up to capacity.[9] The three boys also shared the following set of characteristics:

1) poor work habits (implied above), e.g., doesn't attend, works only sometimes, doesn't finish work.

2) negative behavior habits, e.g., misbehaves generally, (uses "off limits" materials and talks out of turn, disrupts whole-class lessons and reading group meetings).

3) poor relations with peers, e.g., fights with friends, bothers others, doesn't recognize others' needs.

4) negative personality traits, e.g., manipulative, unresponsive to punishment, defiant.

There is a clear contrast here with the model students. As I indicated above (see pp.), Josh and Scott were grouped together by Mr. Fairley on the basis of what he considered to be positive characteristics (good work and behavior habits, good relations with peers, positive personality traits, etc.). The model students, in short, did everything right--and more. In direct contrast, Shane, Jarrod and Pat M. were grouped together on the basis of shared attributes which were, from Mr. Fairley's perspective, negative and detrimental. The chronic problem student, then, did just about everything wrong--and more.[10]

Although the chronic problem child was in a general sense the prototype "bad student," he[11] had several negative attributes that were more salient than others. One was the tendency to misbehave not only in the classroom, but also before school (when the children from all classes gathered together outside the front doors) and during lunchtime. These are some examples of the kinds of misbehavior exhibited by the three chronic problem students during this out-of-class time:

> (1) On 10/28/83, Jarrod and Shane were caught throwing berries at other students before school. They were reported by "safeties," and once in class, were sent down to the principal's office by Mr. Fairley. (fieldnotes, 10/28/83) 12
>
> (2) On the morning of 12/12/83, while I was waiting for the class to arrive, two "safeties" brought Pat M. to the room early and asked me to inform Mr. Fairley that he had been hitting the other students outside. (fieldnotes, 12/12/83). On the following day (12/13/83), Pat was again brought in early by the "safeties", for the same reason.
>
> (3) On 3/27/84, the lunch aide told Mr. Fairley that Shane had been poking holes in milk cartons during lunch, and picking on first graders during recess. Mr. Fairley had this behavior put on record in the office. (fieldnotes and fieldnote notes, 3/27/84).

The aggressive nature of this misbehavior (i.e., picking on others, particularly first graders and kindergarteners) prompted Mr. Fairley to call Jarrod "the Ronald Reagan of the playground": While allowing that there were "some pretty bratty kids around," Mr. Fairley maintained that Jarrod overreacts--"he goes for the overkill" (fieldnote notes, 11/30/83). What went on outside of the classroom, then was no different from what went on inside the classroom:

> Mr. Fairley (said he) doesn't know why, but Jarrod likes to bother people. If he sees that someone is bothered by what he's doing, he seems to take it as a signal to continue. (fieldnote notes, 11/16/83)

One consequence of this out-of-class misbehavior, and particularly of aggressive behavior towards children from other classrooms, was that Jarrod, Shane and Pat M. acquired school-wide problem status--they were recognized as problem students not only by Mr. Fairley, but also by other teachers, by the lunch aides, and by the principal. For instance, when I accompanied the class to the lunchroom one day, I noted that immediately upon our arrival the lunch aide came over to our table and said, "Shane, I want you to be good today." (fieldnotes, 6/4/84)

One aspect of this school wide problem status was the tendency on the part of Mr. Fairley to call on "outsiders," particularly on parents and on the principal, to help him in his attempts to discipline these children. Thus as the misbehavior of the chronic behavior problem students spilled over into areas outside of the classroom, so the people involved in punishing and disciplining them expanded to include others besides Mr. Fairley. The attribute of "being a problem all the time in all situations," then, allowed these three students to achieve that kind of school-wide recognition which follows students from year-to-year, opening avenues for "careers" as problem students.

Returning once again to the boundaries of the classroom, it seems evident that a school-wide problem status would have ramifications for one's in-class status. Indeed, in-class and out-of-class misbehavior played off each other in a way that heightened the perception that these students did everything wrong. This tendency to always do the wrong thing was particularly acute with Shane, who was at the center of the chronic problem group:

> We want to do something, he's doing something else . . . You want him to put away his work, he's got his work out. You want him to get his work out, he's got his work away . . . You've told him all morning to pick up his gloves; now you want his work out, and he's got to get his gloves. (interview 12/15/83)

The impression that the chronic problem child almost timed his misbehavior so that it occurred when Mr. Fairley was most likely to notice it is illustrated in the following vignette, which is centered around an event called "story time":

Immediately prior to "story time" on 3/21/84, the children in the class were involved in several different activities; the higher reading group was finishing a unit test, and the members of the two lower reading groups were either working on seatwork assignments or having an unofficial activity time (painting, playing with building blocks, etc.). When the higher reading group had finished their unit test, Mr. Fairley called all the other children (in which Shane was included) to their seats so that they could get ready for "story time."

After all the children were seated, Mr. Fairley quickly went over the schedule for the remainder of the afternoon. He then went to his book cabinet to get the stories for "story time," momentarily turning his back to the class. As soon as his back was turned, Shane got out of his seat, walked to the opposite side of the room, and started playing on the computer. When Mr. Fairley turned to face the class again, he immediately noticed that Shane was out of his seat, and told him to sit down again. It should be noted here that Shane's behavior was quite conspicuous in this context--all the other children were quietly seated, with their hands folded on top of their desks.

When Shane had returned to his seat, Mr. Fairley called the children by rows to go to the "story time" area (a rug in the back section of the room). Although all the other children were permitted to sit where they chose, Mr. Fairley made Shane sit next to him.

While the children were seating themselves, there was a great deal of commotion over the issue of who, if anyone, could sit in the reading bathtub (a tub filled with pillows) during story time. In the midst of this talk, Shane began to make "clucking" noises ("cluck, cluck, cluck"), which rose slightly above the level of Mr. Fairley's and the students' voices. In response to these noises, Mr. Fairley turned to Shane and said, "This is not a nursery school."

The issue of the bathtub having been settled, and the class having quieted down, Mr. Fairley began to introduce the first story of the day. During his introduction, however, some of the children began to talk again. He lay the book on his lap and told the children that they would have to return to their seats if they could not sit still. As soon as he began to make this statement, the children stopped talking. Shane, however, although not one of the "talkers" in this case (he had remained quiet during Mr. Fairley's introduction), began to make "clucking" noises again when Mr. Fairley was approximately half-way through his sentence. It seemed to me at the time that Shane's outburst could not have been "timed" more perfectly; his noises began almost precisely at that moment when the other children's talk stopped. Without a pause, Mr.

> Fairley turned to Shane and said, "Shane, back to your seat . . . I don't want a baby, Shane."
>
> Until "story time" was almost over, Shane remained close to his seat (although Mr. Fairley had not explicitly told Shane to do so, this was one of the rules of such punishment--being excluded from an activity did not mean that one could go off and have fun by oneself). However, when Mr. Fairley was almost finished with the second story (he usually read only two stories per "story time"), Shane left the area near his desk, went to the opposite side of the room, and began playing on the computer. Again, his "timing" seemed perfect.
>
> When "story time" was over, and the class returned to the front section of the room, Shane was still playing on the computer. Mr. Fairley grabbed Shane by the arm, walked him to his desk, and threatened to send him home for the rest of the afternoon. Although I was not able to hear the conversation, Mr. Fairley later told me that he had asked Shane why he continued to do things that he knew would get him in trouble. Shane did not look at Mr. Fairley while he spoke, but instead put his head down on the desk-top. 13

The impression that Shane misbehaved precisely at those times when it would receive the most attention was one which Mr. Fairley held throughout the school year. Perhaps the most important point here is the notion of deliberate intent: "Mr. Fairley later told me that he had asked Shane why he continued to do things that he knew would get him in trouble." Thus the "problem" with chronic behavior problem students was not only that they consistently misbehaved across all situations, but also that this misbehavior was often accompanied by attitudes expressing defiance or hostility, or an I-don't-care-if-Mr. Fairley-gets-angry stance. All three of these attitudes are illustrated in the following vignette, in which Shane and Jarrod respond to a reprimand for breaking a class rule:

> The class was having a break time between reading group meetings. During these break times, the students were to remain relatively quiet, because Mr. Fairley used the time to give extra help to children who needed or asked for it. Furthermore, the children were not to take out too much

> equipment, and they were not to make a mess with the equipment they did take out.
>
> When break time was about half-way over, one of the boys in the class told Mr. Fairley that Jarrod and Shane were rolling cars all over the front of the room. This was not permitted: if the children wanted to roll cars back and forth between them, they had to sit only a few feet apart; they could not roll cars between them from opposite sides of the room, as this would interfere with the movement of other children in the room and could possibly result in injury from tripping over the cars. Accordingly, Mr. Fairley called to the front of the room and told Jarrod to bring his car back and put it on Mr. Fairley's desk--it was being confiscated. Jarrod got up, and with a pout on his face walked to Mr. Fairley's desk and deposited his car. Shane, not required by Mr. Fairley to present himself at his desk, and seemingly oblivious to Mr. Fairley's reprimand, went over to the rug area and started a new game by himself.
>
> The incident did not stop here, however. Still pouting, Jarrod went to the closet, got his coat, and began taking all the cars from his pocket and flinging them onto Mr. Fairley's desk. Mr. Fairley told Jarrod that he didn't want all his cars, just the one. Jarrod's pout did not disappear, however, and after putting the cars back into his coat pockets, he walked off, threw his coat across the floor, picked it up, and then threw it under his desk. Mr. Fairley either did not see this, or chose to ignore it.
>
> Having left his coat under his desk, Jarrod went to the rug area to rejoin Shane. Shane seemed to have forgotten the entire incident. Jarrod was still angry, however, and soon began to throw some building blocks across the rug. When Mr. Fairley noticed this he turned to me and said, "Look over there--see what I mean? He's impossible." He then proceeded to have a private talk with both Jarrod and Shane, and threatened Jarrod that, "If I see that nasty look on your face I'm gonna send you down to Mr.__________ (principal) and he can take you home." (fieldnotes, 2/13/85)

Jarrod's behavior during this event was clearly both hostile and defiant, from the perspectives of both Mr. Fairley and myself. Although only required to give up one car, he tried to make a show of giving up all his possessions, after which he proceeded to break even more rules by throwing building blocks. As Mr. Fairley once noted in a different context, one wonders whether Jarrod was "testing" Mr. Fairley to see how much he could get away with (fieldnote notes 2/13/84).

Shane's seeming obliviousness to Mr. Fairley's reprimand was equally striking, and serves to illustrate the I-don't-care-if-Mr. Fairley-gets-angry stance. Although such a stance contrasts with attitudes of defiance and hostility, and with the notion of timed misbehavior, there were times when all 3 chronic behavior problem students seemed disinterested in Mr. Fairley's attentions. The patterns of defiance, hostility, and timing, then, were prevalent, but not immutable.[14]

Social Class. Although the attributes described above were shared by all three chronic behavior problem students, there was a difference in the explanatory frameworks used by Mr. Fairley in his sense-making of Pat M.'s behavior on the one hand, and that of Shane and Jarrod on the other. This difference in interpretation reflected a difference in the socio-economic backgrounds of these children, with Pat M. coming from a middle class background, and Shane and Jarrod having lower class backgrounds.[15] Since this is an example of a non-local feature (social class) taking on local meanings, it would seem appropriate here to describe how class was invoked as an explanation for misbehavior.

The most notable difference between Mr. Fairley's explanations of Pat M.'s behavior on the one hand, and Jarrod's and Shane's on the other, was in the frequency with which he referred to the child's home situation. Although when speaking of Pat M., Mr. Fairley did on occasion refer to a "pampered" home environment in which Pat's whims were catered to and in which he did not receive enough discipline (viewing session, 3/6/84; interview, 6/13/84), such references were rare. Rather, Mr. Fairley seemed to restrict his explanations of Pat's misbehavior to Pat himself--to personality characteristics such as laziness (fieldnote notes, 2/13/84) and immaturity (viewing session, 3/6/84). Pat's problem, then, was in a real sense Pat's problem, as is illustrated by the following notation in my fieldnote notes:

> (Mr. Fairley) told me that on Pat M's report (to be sent to his parents) he wrote that Pat is quite intelligent, but he just won't use his brains - he's lazy. He said that the same thing has been written by all his teachers in the past; and he has no idea what Pat's parents make of this. (fieldnote notes 5/31/84)

Again, although Mr. Fairley occasionally commented on the leniency of Pat's parents, the more frequently expressed attitude was that Pat must be a burden to his parents - or that Pat was a burden, period.

Shane's and Jarrod's misbehavior, on the other hand, was often explained in terms of their home situations. Although they too were characterized as lazy and immature, their laziness and immaturity (along with their other attributes) were consistently seen within the context of what Mr. Fairley considered to be deprived home environments, in which parents were irresponsible and unaffectionate. Explanation of the problem, then, was not restricted to the child himself, but was broadened to include the child's family situation as well. If blame were to be assigned, the parents would be held as accountable as the child, if not more.

Following are some representative examples of this home-life explanatory framework:

1. During recess on 9/14/83, Jarrod "bullied" some of the other children (threatened to hit them, etc.). On 9/15/83, Mr. Fairley explained Jarrod's behavior by referring to a conversation he overheard in which Jarrod's mother had threatened to beat Jarrod if he did not behave in school. He felt that there was a connection between Jarrod's home life and his aggressiveness, and that Jarrod had to hurt others in order to avoid getting hurt.

2. On 9/19/83, Mr. Fairley expressed concern over Shane's lack of participation in classroom activities, and connected this lack of participation with Shane's coming from a family in which, he had heard, the mother drinks, and which had had a history of child-custody difficulties: "Mr. Fairley figures that there have to be some problems in that household; otherwise Shane wouldn't be the way he is."

3. On 9/23/83, in referring to such misbehavior as throwing water on the bulletin board and spitting on other children, Mr. Fairley stated that Shane and Jarrod probably received "too much discipline" and "not enough affection."

4. The week before Thanksgiving, the class prepared their own Thanksgiving dinner. Each child was expected to contribute to the menu, and parents were responsible for their children's contributions. Shane and Jarrod were the only children in the class who did not contribute; on the day of the dinner, their parents did not bring in their assigned dishes. Mr. Fairley's response to this was that "both mothers just don't care about some things." (fieldnote notes, 11/23/83)

5. On 5/31/84, Mr. Fairley kept Shane in the reading group area after the other children had left. I later asked him about this, and made the following comment in my notes:

   (Mr. Fairley) said that the reason he kept Shane in the reading group was that he smelled bad. (He) has seen him come to school dirty before, but not this dirty. (He) wishes that each classroom came equipped with a shower; that way, he could put Shane in the shower after school and wash his clothes for him. Shane will be going to live with someone else (probably his grandmother) for 8 months; (Mr. Fairley) wonders what Shane's mother will be doing for those 8 months--he hopes that she will at least be looking for a job, if not actually working at one. (fieldnote notes 5/31/84) 16

As can be seen from these examples, Mr. Fairley directed his criticism to the family situations of Shane and Jarrod, rather than on Shane and Jarrod themselves; Mr. Fairley saw these children within the context of their home lives, and thus focused on what he considered to be class differences in values and life-style. Indeed, in our discussions of social class, it was to notions of value-as-reflected-in-life-style that Mr. Fairley referred to the most:

> most teachers come from a middle class background and feel more comfortable with middle class children that have the same values (interview 5/4/84).

Three values--respect for property, respect for adults and authority, and discipline and family stability--seemed particularly important to Mr. Fairley. The presence or absence of these values, rather than family income, determined for him whether a child was middle class or lower class. Moreover, he considered their absence to be one of the major causes of conflict between lower and middle class students and teachers. Each of these 3 values will be discussed in turn.

(1) Respect for property. One of the values apparently not held by either Jarrod or Shane was respect for property, a fact indicated by overall messiness and lost or damaged materials. Mr. Fairley stated:

> I own things and take care of them. And children in this class who are middle class have things and take care of them. I know that one of the problems with poorer children is they don't have things . . . it doesn't matter whether they take care of them or don't take care of them, they don't have them. Most of the things they have, they either--somebody gave them, they found them, or they stole them. And it isn't that middle class children don't steal. They do steal. The difference is that when you own something you're less likely to steal from somebody else because you're afraid they're

> going to steal back from you. And when you have something of value, you pretty quickly learn that if the world is going to survive and you're going to keep your things, then you're going to need to take care of yours, and also make sure that everybody else is taken care of too. (interview, 5/4/84)

One of the results of not having things, then, is not learning how to respect, value and take care of them, and even more importantly, not learning to respect other people's property as *theirs*:

> Shane asks me for everything all the time. He always needs things of mine . . . He never mentions . . . paying you back or any of those things. I don't know, I'm sure again that's my middle class upbringing, but you know, you don't borrow unless you can repay and maybe that isn't the case with some families. (interview, 5/4/84)

Even Shane's mother was like this: "She'll ask anybody for anything at any time." (interview 5/4/84)[17]

(2) *Respect for adults/respect for authority*. Referring back to his experiences in teaching in lower socioeconomic schools, Mr. Fairley stated that:

> . . . the little kids don't respect teachers, they don't respect any adult. I mean not their parents either. If the parent doesn't belt them they don't get the respect. (interview, 5/4/84)

Mr. Fairley felt that Shane and Jarrod also would not respect authority unless it was both immediate and physically painful. After discussing with Mr. Fairley the one occasion during the year on which he had spanked Shane, I made the following notation in my fieldnote notes:

> Mr. Fairley said that he hated hitting Shane--it goes against everything he believes in (that violence begets violence), but it seems as if violence is the only thing that Shane reacts to--he said something here about Shane's mother using a belt to discipline him. He said that if he (Shane) comes from that type of family, that's the only thing he understands. (fieldnote notes, 4/6/84)

Indeed, Mr. Fairley often complained that when he tried to talk with either Jarrod or Shane (and especially with Shane) about their misbehavior, they just didn't listen. For example, after spending almost an entire recess period talking with Shane about stealing (he had been seen stealing by another teacher), Mr. Fairley reported his frustration to me:

> Mr. Fairley told me that Shane feels no guilt--he just thinks he can do these things and get away with it, and he isn't really concerned about getting in trouble, or about the fact that the teacher who saw him will never trust him again. Mr. Fairley said that Shane didn't really care about what he was saying; he just kept on asking when Mr. Fairley would let him go and play. (fieldnote notes, 5/25/84)

In addition to the tendency to ignore, or react inappropriately, to Mr. Fairley's "talks" or reprimands--a tendency which Pat M. shared with Shane and Jarrod--the boys' lack of respect for authority often took the form of hostility. Thus Mr. Fairley stated that Jarrod was that type of student who "would like a confrontation" with his teacher. (interview, 12/15/83.) This hostility, however, was not a tendency shared by Pat M., the middle class student in the group.

(3) Discipline and family stability. As noted above, Mr. Fairley connected this lack of respect for authority with the kind of discipline the children received at home, and thus with the kind of interaction they were accustomed to in their dealings with parents and other adults:

> . . . from what I've seen, some lower economic families handle discipline and things in a different way. You know, it's more, the kids are left alone until they're bad and then they're . . . hit. And I think that's more a matter of not being enlightened as to the new methods of discipline and raising children. (interview 5/4/84)

This type of interaction, in which adults deal with children only when they have done something wrong, and in which the interaction itself is of a negative physical nature, implied for Mr. Fairley a lack of affection between parents and children in these households. Not only did these children not get enough attention, but the attention they did get was the wrong kind. He contrasted this with the closer, healthier, type of relationships which he felt prevailed in middle class families:

> I think that when they have parenting classes, the classes are usually heavily middle class. Middle class parents, for the most part, go into more things of raising your children and talking to them and sharing with them. And I don't know why that is accepted. I think that sometimes . . . well, the mother doesn't work and they have more time to think about those kinds of things. I mean, if . . . all you're thinking about is getting enough money to get focd on the table, you probably don't have time to think about, you know, PTA and other parenting programs. (interview, 5/4/84)
>
> More pointedly, parents in middle class families have
>
> . . . more time to spend with their children. And you know . . . there's a difference when a child comes home from school and a parent is there and looking after him . . . that makes a difference." (interview, 5/4/84) 18

Mr. Fairley associated the kind of discipline which children received at home with their self-discipline in the classroom. For instance, referring to Josh, one of the model students, Mr. Fairley made the following comment:

> Kids under control generally have had a parent who is patient with them, led them the right way. It's not a matter of the amount of discipline. It's a matter of teaching, talking, and this kind of thing. And I suspect that kids who are having trouble with control maybe somebody has fouled up. Now some kids are a little harder than other children. I suspect that Josh would be pretty easy going regardless of what his mother said, but I think you would find that Josh could be a pretty wild little boy if somebody hadn't taught him how to behave. (viewing session, 3/6/84) 19

As a result of his upbringing and self-discipline, Josh was able to be left on his own in school, while Shane required constant monitoring:

> If I see Shane not working, since I know he's not assuming responsibility, I've got to constantly remind him because I know he won't go back to his task. But I never say anything to Josh. If I see him looking around the room about 10 o'clock, I never say, "Josh, is your work done?" because I know it will be done, and if it isn't finished now, it will be when it's expected. (viewing session, 3/6/84)

Such comments indicate that Mr. Fairley felt that Jarrod and Shane came from lower-class families. Implicit in this is his perception that the other children in the class came from middle class families. (i.e., families which believed in and practiced middle class values), and that they consequently shared more with Mr. Fairley than did either Shane or Jarrod. In contrast to the other children in the class, then, Jarrod and Shane were raised according to values which hindered their participation in classroom life and which promoted conflict between themselves and Mr. Fairley. Again, "most teachers come from a middle-class background and feel more comfortable with middle class children that have the same values" (interview, 5/4/84). Whereas other children in the class came from families with "normal," or desirable, value systems, Shane and Jarrod had backgrounds which were "different" enough to be noted as contributing factors to their misbehavior.

The chronic behavior problem group was made up of three boys with school-wide reputations for consistent (and persistent) misbehavior. As a group, they contrasted most directly with the model student group (the model students were the only students whose attributes were all positive, while the chronic behavior problem students were the only students whose attributes were negative);

they also contrasted with the girls in the class who misbehaved (see section on episodic behavior problem students, below).

Although all three boys shared a set of what he considered to be negative and detrimental attributes, Mr. Fairley made some distinctions between Shane and Jarrod, on the one hand, and Pat M., on the other. These distinctions, based on social class, reflected differences in Mr. Fairley's perception of the students' behavior (e.g., Pat M. was not considered as hostile as either Jarrod or Shane), as well as differences in his explanations for their misbehavior, and thus for their designated status as "problem" students.

Despite class differences, however, Mr. Fairley considered Pat M., Shane, and Jarrod to be "of the same kind"; middle class or lower class, they were serious problem students, and they remained problems throughout the school year.

The Academic Problem Student

Although all three chronic behavior problem students tended not do their work, Pat M. managed to do enough work that he had good academic standing.[20] This was not the case, however, with Jarrod and Shane, whose work was of such low quality that they were academic problems as well as chronic behavior problems.

The academic problem student was one who had trouble understanding the content of instruction, and who had difficulty completing assignments. A sample of Jarrod's work follows, which illustrates the performance of an academic problem student. The words in the left column were given on the worksheet; the words in the right column represent Jarrod's attempt to provide the base words for the words to the left. This kind of exercise was not new to him, for the class had been working on the concept of base words for several months.

faces	face
hottest	hot
skaters	skat
saved	save
libraries	librar
copied	cop
digging	dige
wagged	wag
writing	writ
beginner	beg
emptier	empt
whitest	whit

(fieldnote notes, 6/5/84)

Mr. Fairley associated such poor academic performance with Jarrod's status as a chronic behavior problem (and thus, with his lower class background). This is evident in the summary I wrote of our discussion of the worksheet:

> Mr. Fairley said that Jarrod will have to be in the same reading book next year; he hasn't put out any real effort to learn the material. The problem with kids like Jarrod and Shane, Mr. Fairley said, is that they have no self-motivation--their parents aren't encouraging at home in any steady fashion; and if these kids' parents (Mr. Fairley pointed out that Jarrod was wearing filthy shorts today) can't even wash their kid's clothes if they're not even disciplined enough to do that how can the kids be expected to come to school and work as well as Josh does? What's important is stability. In Mr. Fairley's family, each person had a chore to do each day, his father went to work each morning, etc. Shane doesn't even have any jobs at home. (fieldnote notes, 6/5/84)

The academic standings of Jarrod and Shane, then, had little to do with any inherent deficiencies or disabilities, but rather reflected a lack of motivation which was inextricably connected with their behavior problems. The one seemed a direct cause of the other:

> When he (Shane) takes his time . . . (and) thinks about what he's doing, he doesn't really have any difficulty. I also don't think that Shane should have any difficulty learning to read, if he can get his act together a little better. And there is absolutely nothing hindering his ability to read . . . He doesn't reverse letters . . . he has pretty good phonics skills, he understands context clues. There really isn't any reason why he shouldn't be . . . a pretty average second grader. Except for the fact that, the amount of time that he's paying attention . . . is about ten percent of what most other children (do)." (interview, 12/15/83)

Shane and Jarrod, then, had trouble understanding content and completing assignments because they didn't try.[21] The other four children in the academic problem group[22] (Pat S., Chris, Margie and Tonya), however, were not seen as suffering from lack of effort or motivation. Mr. Fairley attributed their poor academic performance to other causes.

Pat S., Chris, Margie and Tonya differed from Shane and Jarrod not only with respect to motivation, but to other attributes as well. All four students, for instance, were noted for their good work habits (i.e., works well and hard, gets (or tries to get) work done). Also, in contrast with Shane and Jarrod, these four students were seen as having good peer relations (being friendly and caring about others), more or less positive behavior patterns (listening, abiding by classroom rules), and more or less positive personality traits (likes and tries to learn, easy to work with).[23]

At this point, however, the similarities between Pat S., Chris, Margie and Tonya end, inasmuch as Mr. Fairley used different explanatory frameworks for making sense of their academic difficulties. The six academic problem students, then, were placed into three subcategories, according to the perceived cause of their difficulties. The causes to which Mr. Fairley attributed Shane's and Jarrod's academic performance have already been discussed; I will now turn to a discussion of his explanations of the difficulties experienced by Pat S. and Chris, on the one hand, and Margie and Tonya, on the other.

The academic problems experienced by Pat S. and Chris were attributed by Mr. Fairley, to what he called "intellectual immaturity." "Intellectual immaturity" was seen as an inability to understand or apply particular concepts, despite one's attempts to do so. Referring to Pat S., for instance, Mr. Fairley stated that:

> he can attend to a task, but (he's) not . . . sure what the task is, and not because he hasn't listened, but because he hasn't . . . organized his thinking . . . He would look at words and not understand that there is a process for figuring out what the word is. (viewing session, 3/6/84)

The problem, then, was one of maturity, of growing up, and thus was not considered to be of a permanent nature. Indeed, both Pat S. and Chris showed some improvement over the course of the year, and Mr. Fairley expected that both students would eventually "snap out of it and become pretty good students." (interview, 7/16/84)

This was not the case, however, with Margie and Tonya. Their problems were not related to immaturity, but rather to what Mr. Fairley considered to be some kind of disability in their ability to think and learn. For instance, at the end of the year he summed up Tonya's academic standing as follows:

> Tonya has some learning disabilities. In the way she reasons, there are some gaps in her learning. And she repeated first grade. I see her as a slightly below average student. (interview, 6/13/84)

Margie also had "gaps." Describing her as difficult to "figure out," Mr. Fairley felt she probably had a learning disability problem; he aired his suspicion that "there's something there that isn't completely screwed on right" (interview, 1/19/84). The following vignette helps illustrate what some of Margie's gaps looked like.

> Having gone on an all-day field-trip to a museum on the previous day, the children were excited and eager to talk about their experiences when they came to school in the morning. As soon as Mr. Fairley had finished taking attendance and lunch count, a student yelled out to his classmates, "Who had fun on the trip?" Over the roar of numerous cries of "me! me!", Mr. Fairley asked, "who learned something on the trip?" Hands flew into the air and the children jumped up and down in their seats to get Mr. Fairley's attention. When Mr. Fairley took a bid from Margie, one of the more eager bidders, she lowered her hand, looked slightly confused, and replied, "I don't know."
>
> Other children in the class had experiences they wanted to recount, however, and soon the class was involved in a lengthy discussion of one particular exhibit which demonstrated the advance and retreat of glaciers in the state of Michigan. Mr. Fairley began by explaining how the exhibit worked: the interested observer would turn a wheel, a map of Michigan would come down and the southward movement of glaciers would be shown. From this explanation of how the exhibit worked, Mr. Fairley went on to explain in more detail the speed at which glaciers move, the evidence of glaciation, and the effects which glaciers had on soil quality. These explanations were punctuated by a series of questions from the children about such topics as the making of Lake Michigan. After answering a question on the origins of glaciers, Mr. Fairley took a bid from Margie, who asked, "Um, did you see that thing . . . where you turn the wheel and a map comes down?" Mr. Fairley responded, "Margie, that's what we're talking about." Indeed, the discussion of the wheel exhibit had lasted for almost ten minutes. After Margie's question, Mr. Fairley took a bid from another student who brought up another exhibit with wheels, and the class switched to a discussion of that exhibit. (fieldnotes, 5/17/84)

Being overly eager to get the floor and then having nothing to say is not an unusual occurrence in a second grade classroom: in their eagerness, children often forget what it was they had to say. But Margie's confusion when she got the floor, coupled with her attempt to introduce a topic which had been being disussed for the last ten minutes, illustrates the degree to which she was out of tune, so to speak, with the rest of the class.

Gender

Mr. Fairley's view of Pat S's and Chris' temporary academic problems versus his sense of the more-or-less permanent nature of Margie's and Tonya's academic problems suggests a general difference in how Mr. Fairley made sense of and understood boys' and girls' "academic natures." This distinction is easily seen in the following statement, in which Mr. Fairley discusses why he prefers to retain boys as opposed to girls:

> Because boys mature more slowly than girls, boys are usually better candidates for retention . . . generally, the problems that you can help by retention are the problems that boys have because they're slow in maturing. You get ten (immature boys) for every one immature girl, and that's the case all the time. Boys that are in the low reading group often can blossom and be good readers. Girls that are in the low group, usually it's because they're problem readers. Now, I think there's an equal number of boys and girls with reading difficulties and yet the low reading groups are usually more boys than girls, because the boys' group is divided into those with real reading problems and those who are immature, who'll be good readers just give them time to grow. And it's that little group that I like to retain. (interview, 1/19/84)

On an even more general level, this distinction was reflected in the differential concern which Mr. Fairley had with boys' and girls' "extra" interests. Recall that being into "extras" meant having interests that went beyond the curriculum, as well as the motivation to pursue those interests. Thus a child who liked poetry, who was interested in the planets and astronomy, or who was serious about art, was considered to be a child who was into "extras." (The only limitation here was that "extras" could not be "play," i.e., playing with dolls or playing football. The one exception was play involving computers.)

Two findings with regard to gender and "extra" interests seem noteworthy here. First, in both casual and formal conversation, Mr. Fairley attributed "has extra interests" more to boys than to girls (nine out of thirteen boys versus only two of the eight girls). There was also a difference in the type of "extra" interests which Mr. Fairley noticed in the behavior of the girls versus that of the boys. For example, the "extra" interests of the two girls were in the area of art:

> She (Nedra) does a lot of interesting things. She and Tamika make a lot of things, paint a lot of neat pictures. And those are good experiences for them. (interview, 12/15/84)

In contrast, boys' "extra" interests, according to Mr. Fairley, were more "academic" or "serious," focusing in on such areas as astronomy, biology, or computers. Thus, proportionally more boys than girls were perceived as having "extra" interests, and the boys' "extra" interests were more "academic" or intellectual than those of the girls.

Secondly, it seemed that it was more important to Mr. Fairley that boys should have extra interests than that the girls should. The major evidence for this was that perceived lack of such interests in girl students was never noted by Mr. Fairley, whereas this lack was often noted when the student was a boy (in three of the four cases where boys were considered as not having "extra" interests). It seemed, then, that having or not having "extra" interests was important to Mr. Fairley in his assessment of his male students, whereas only the presence, not the absence, of "extras" was noticeable in his female students.[24]

The implication here is that Mr. Fairley considered intellectual attitudes to be more important for boys than for girls. For example, of the seven children Mr. Fairley saw as bright and intelligent, only one was a girl; whereas of the five children Mr. Fairley stated were darling, cuddly, or sweet, none were boys. The contrast presented here is perhaps too extreme: Mr. Fairley was concerned with the academic performance of the girls in his classroom, and he encouraged all the children in his room to pursue any extra interests that they may have had. As an indication of a general trend, however, the contrast holds and, although an intellectual attitude was important for both girls and boys, it seemed to be slightly more important for boys than for girls. This may indicate why it was that, with the exception of one girl who was placed in the above average category, all the girls were either academic problems, episodic problems, or average. The boys, in contrast, were more evenly distributed across the categories, and also predominated in the categories of above average and model student.[25]

In the category of academic problem, then, there were three sets of students: 1) Jarrod and Shane, whose problems were seen to result from a lack of effort; 2) Pat S. and Chris, whose problems were connected with immaturity and thus were temporary; and 3) Margie and Tonya, whose problems reflected learning disabilities which were not likely to diminish in the future. This group of children was more heterogeneous than any of the other groups discussed above; they were distinguished from the rest of the class on the basis of their academic difficulties, and then were distinguished from each other on the basis of perceived causes for these difficulties.

The Episodic Behavior Problem Student (Margie, Tonya, Nedra, Tamika, Crystal). In the above two sections, I discussed the ways in which Mr. Fairley considered Jarrod and Shane to be both academic problem students and chronic behavior problem students. His placement of them in both groups reflected a causal connection he made between their behavior problems and their academic performance. Two other students, Margie and Tonya, were also considered to have both behavior and academic problems. There were two differences, however, between their situation and that of Jarrod and Shane: 1) Mr. Fairley did not make a causal connection between Margie's and Tonya's behavior and academic problems--they were simply seen as having both; and 2) their "episodic" misbehavior, as will be seen below, differed in both kind and amount from that of the chronic behavior problem students.

In addition to Margie and Tonya, the episodic behavior problem group included three other students: Nedra, Tamika, and Crystal. Nedra was a very bright student who may well have been placed in the above average group if she did not misbehave as often as she did.[26] Tamika and Crystal, aside from their misbehavior, were considered by Mr. Fairley to be pretty average students (see following section). Like the academic problem group, this group of students was fairly heterogeneous, exhibiting a relatively wide range of both positive and negative work habits, academic performances, behavior patterns, and personality traits.

There were, however, three characteristics shared by all five students in this group. The first of these, of course, was that the episodic problem child was one who misbehaved on occasion, or went through recurrent phases (lasting several days to several weeks) of misbehaving. Misbehavior here included such acts as repeatedly "not listening" (or "not hearing") when Mr. Fairley told the class to be seated, insisting on talking during "work time," etc.

The second characteristic of the episodic problem student was that she[27] was a student who *usually* conformed to classroom rules and tasks. The occasional instances or phases of misbehavior were therefore interpreted against an overall framework of conformity, and thus were seen as departures from it. Therefore, although the misbehavior of these students looked the same as that of the chronic behavior problem students, Mr. Fairley did not consider it to be normal for, or characteristic of, the episodic behavior problem. This view of the episodic behavior problem as the child with a more or less firm foundation who nevertheless slips up on occasion is reflected in the following statement, in which Mr. Fairley refers to all five episodic problem students:

> . . . Nedra can be a really little pain in the rear end. And so can Tamika, and so can Margie, and so can Crystal, and so can Tonya--at any one time.[28] And yet, I have no bad thoughts about them. I think they're awfully nice little kids--they're kids being kids when they misbehave. Because they all have learned a great deal this year. They all have

> done good work.[29] They all treat me awfully nice and they all seem to know that, when I'm being very serious with them, they seem to rise to the occasion. (interview, 5/4/84)

In contrast to the chronic behavior problem student, who seemed to time misbehavior so that it occurred when Mr. Fairley was most likely to notice it, one gets the impression here that these students knew how to time their misbehavior so that it occurred when Mr. Fairley was least likely to notice it or when he would be less likely to be offended or disturbed by it (note the phrase: "they all seem to know that, when I'm being very serious with them, they seem to rise to the occasion").

The third characteristic of the episodic problem highlights the above statement, "They all treat me awfully nice." Specifically, this refers to the tendency on the part of these children to apologize to Mr. Fairley for their misbehavior: "When they step over the line, they've learned how to make amends for it" (interview, 5/4/84). This apology usually took the form of a note written to Mr. Fairley and placed in his mailbox with either an explicit apology or an indirect one ("I love you, Mr. Fairley"), or of attempts to behave properly and act nicely. Regardless of the form it took--formal apology, love note, hug, smile, good behavior, etc.--the point is that these children somehow conveyed to Mr. Fairley that they were sorry for their misbehavior and that they cared about him and cared whether or not he liked them. They understood Mr. Fairley's anger with their misbehavior and saw it as legitimate.[30] Thus not only was their misbehavior less consistent than that of the chronic behavior problems, but their attitude toward Mr. Fairley's reactions to their misbehavior also differed. In contrast to the antagonism present in the relationships between Mr. Fairley and the chronic behavior problem students, then, the relationship between Mr. Fairley and these students was a good one. Perhaps this relates to the fact that all the children in this group were girls, while all the children in the chronic behavior problem group were boys. It would seem that, just as girls were less outstanding than boys academically, so their misbehavior was perceived to be less disruptive, and perhaps also less deliberate and directed, than that of the boys--indeed, as if boys were more salient than girls in all areas.

To summarize, Nedra, Tamika, Crystal, Margie, and Tonya were all students whose more-or-less good "records" were punctuated by occasional bouts of misbehavior. These bouts, however, were only bouts, and being perceived as such, they never became symptoms of "problems" of the sort exhibited by the chronic behavior problems or the academic problems.

The Average Student (Tamika, Crystal, Jason, Nedra, Stephanie, David K., Michael, Jill). It may seem remarkable that the average students should be the last group to be discussed. Such placement, however, reflects the most important distinguishing characterictic of average students, namely, that there was nothing remarkable about them.[31] Unlike the model, above-average, or academic problem students, the average students displayed neither unusually high nor unusually low academic skills; unlike the chronic behavior problem students, none of the average students had serious behavioral problems. Three of the students--Tamika, Crystal and Nedra--were episodic behavior problems, but, as shown above, there was nothing critical about the "problems" of the episodic behavior problem students.

There was very little about the average students as a group that stood out. I have, therefore, chosen to approach the problem of description by providing a brief sketch of each individual in the group. Since the group was divided into high-average (i.e., does most or all of her/his work and almost always does it well) and low average (i.e., does most of her/his work and often does it well), I will divide my descriptions into two groups.

Low average 1. Tamika. Tamika was a somewhat aloof, but nevertheless pleasant, student (interview, 5/4/84), who fluctuated in her work habits across the year, but who made improvements in her reading ability and in other academic skills. At the end of the year, Mr. Fairley said the following about Tamika:

> . . . Just a nice personality, and I've gotten all kinds of nice little notes and nice little pictures from Tamika, and she would say some of the nicest things. She's also gone from not knowing how to read to doing fairly well. (interview, 6/13/84)

He added, however, that she didn't take tests very well, and had problems attending to and following directions (interview, 6/13/84). She was also an episodic behavior problem.

2. Crystal. Like Tamika, Crystal also fluctuated in her work habits across the year. She performed well in some areas, such as phonics and math, but was slightly behind in others, such as context clues (interviews, 12/15/83, 6/13/84). She was likeable and easy to work with, although she was occasionally gruff with

her fellow students (interviews, 9/21/83, 5/4/84). Again, like Tamika, Crystal was an episodic behavior problem.

3. Jason. Jason was an extremely shy little boy, who was likeable, but who had few friends in the class (interview, 12/15/83). Although he was slow in answering questions and didn't flaunt his academic skills, he was a conscientious worker who usually did know the right answer to questions when prodded (interview, 12/15/83). At the end of the year, after noting that Jason had made a lot of progress in a lot of areas, Mr. Fairley made the following comment:

> . . . Just a very delightful little boy. You know, if I had to pick a couple little boys that I'd like to take home to live with me forever, Jason would be right there. (interview, 6/13/84)

High Average

4. Nedra. Nedra was a likeable and intelligent student whose work occasionally suffered because she did not always take it seriously:

> . . . Nedra I think could do a little better on her work. She's still a baby, and she was in the beginning of the year and still is now. And she also, I think, needs a lot of time to play. She rushes through her work at her seat most of the days . . . and when she does, I get a lot of wrong answers. (interview, 12/15/83)

Nedra also was an episodic behavior problem student, and, of that group she was perhaps the most defiant, sometimes acting "bratty," and sometimes "spoiled" (interviews, 5/4/84, 6/13/84).[32] She was, however, in many ways a "perfect student" (interview, 7/16/84) who understood concepts and produced good work when she could sit still long enough.

5. Stephanie. Stephanie was notable for her preoccupation with being "into what's proper and what's correct and what isn't," and for her habit of tattling on others (interview, 12/15/83). She was, however, a friendly and affectionate child (interview, 6/13/84). With regard to academics, Stephanie was "a pretty average second grader . . . She has a pretty good reading ability and she does quite well in her math, and she listens fairly well." (interview, 12/15/83)

6. David K. David K. was most noted for being an excitable person who had problems with self-control. (Mr. Fairley called him "wild" (interview, 6/13/84)), but who nevertheless was considered him a good student:

> David is a pretty good student and can really concentrate. And he needs to. I have some excellent work from David. And very seldom does he make very many mistakes on his papers. I think he has a greater ability to understand what we're doing than the other four children in this (reading) group. He's also very precise. (interview, 12/15/83)

7. Michael. Michael was retained by Mr. Fairley and was now spending his second year with him. In contrast to his first year with Mr. Fairley, during which he rarely paid attention or finished his work, Michael performed quite well this year: Although not at the top of the class, he consistently did good work and rarely misbehaved. Mr. Fairley stated that he was "probably the best person I've ever retained, the most successful . . . He just fits in perfectly with the class." (interview, 6/13/84)

8. Jill. Like Jason, Jill was an extremely shy person who needed to be "pried open" to get answers (interview, 9/21/83). Because of her reticence, it was difficult at first to evaluate her academic skills, but in the end, she made more progress than

any of the other students in her reading group (interview, 12/15/83). She was a hard worker, and "acted up" only once, at the end of the year (interview, 6/13/84). Although she had no more friends than Jason, she was a nice, likeable person (interview, 6/13/84).

The average students were a diverse group, whose individual members had differing academic strengths and weaknesses, and different personality traits for which they were best known. What connected the children together as a group, then, was that none stood out in a markedly positive or negative way--they were, for the most part, "middle of the road" students. Again, however, their status as "average" did not make these students unimportant. Indeed, it could be argued that their "average-ness" heightened what was notable in other students' behavior (i.e., made good or poor academic performance or behavior all the more salient), in the same way that other students' noteworthy behavior made these students seem "normal."

Discussion

On the relativity of identity types across school years. The identity types which have been described here are not absolute types, which look like and mean the same thing across school years and classes. The names of types, or categories, of students may not change across the years--thus in every classroom one may find model students, academic problem students, behavior problem students, etc.--but the meanings which these names have, and what the students who make up each type look like, changes from year to year, dependent on the unique composition of each new class. The child who is an episodic problem student in one class may be a chronic problem student in another class, or the model student of this year's class may be the average student of last year's class.

Since I had the opportunity to work with Mr. Fairley for more than one school year, I was able to observe some of these differences in the meanings of labels across years. The following vignette, which compares the two classes' reactions to the same story game, illustrates general differences between the classes which serve to shed light on some of the specific differences in the meanings of such labels as "model student."

> In late October, Mr. Fairley began a story game with the class. The game was meant to get the students to use their reading skills, to convince them that reading was a fun thing to do, and to get them curious--to get them interested in "extras."
>
> Mr. Fairley began the game by distributing a short story which he had written about a group of survivors from a destroyed planet called Zing. This group of Zingons had come to earth, disguised as earthlings, with the purpose of teaching earth children about peace, so that they could prevent a repetition of the events which had led to the destruction of the planet Zing. More specifically, the story was concerned with one particular Zingon named Zato, who was, the children were told, someone they knew. The problem was, Zato was in danger of being discovered, and if he was discovered, he would be sent away. The narrator of the story thus called for the children's aid in preventing the "powers that be" from discovering Zato. First, however, the children needed to find out who Zato was (he was disguised as an earthling), without letting Zato know what they were doing. To this end, a series of clues ("secret notes") were distributed over the course of the next few months. Zato was, of course, Mr. Fairley.
>
> This story game was not new. Mr. Fairley had used it in last year's class with great success: The children enjoyed receiving--and actively sought out--the secret clues, and they became intensely involved in the unfolding of the story. Despite their enjoyment of the game, however, this year's

> class did not get quite as involved. In early January, for example, Mr. Fairley noticed one boy come in in the morning, open his desk, see one of the secret clues, read it, and then simply put it back in his desk. This was not what had been expected; it had been expected that the children would share the clues with each other--there should at least have been some talk about the clues. Mr. Fairley noted furthermore that the children were not involved in searching the room for secret clues left behind shelves or in corners. Thus when he placed a clue on the floor in the play area (an area where the children spent a lot of time), none of the children noticed it, and Mr. Fairley had to ask one of the lunch aides to point it out to them. Mr. Fairley later remarked on the different reactions of this year's and last year's classes, and noted that even Josh needed to have an adult show him where the clues were. (fieldnote notes, 1/12/84)

It is clear from the above vignette that there were some general differences between the two classes in terms of curiosity and motivation. It is also clear that along with these general differences there were some very specific differences in the meanings and composition of identity types. Continuing with the example of the model student, it seems probable that although Josh and Scott may have been recognized as very good students within the context of last year's class, they may not have been considered model students--or at least their modelness may not have been so outstanding: a student who needed to have secret clues pointed out to her or him certainly would not have stood out as an exceptional child in a class in which most of the students were able to find the clues on their own.

One gets a picture here that seems very different from the one which I presented in the section on the model student. In the latter, the description was of outstanding students who went "beyond the call of duty" in all areas, whereas in the description above, one sees students who are not quite on par with their fellow second graders. The contrast is a striking one, which clearly illustrates the point that what is seen as "model," "average," or "problem" in one year may not correlate perfectly with what is seen as "model," "average," or "problem" in another year.

This does not mean that there is no carry-over, so to speak, from year to year--it would be hard, for example, to imagine a class in which Josh and Scott would be categorized as academic problems or chronic behavior problems. Thus, although there may be no set of specific criteria for modelness against which all children are measured point by point, there is a theme, or motif, of modelness which cuts across school years, and which enables an experienced teacher like Mr. Fairley to recognize model students within the first few days of the school year. Thinking in terms of themes, then, it seems evident that what is consistent, or predetermined, about the model student is that s/he is a cut above her or his fellow classsmates--that s/he is better at doing most tasks, has slightly better behavioral habits, etc. The specifics of being a cut above are then open to a great deal of variation (see Erickson, 1982), depending on the class of which the model student is a part (see section 2, below); i.e., being a cut above in this year's class--a class containing several children with severe behavior problems--meant especially that one consistently behaved appropriately and finished tasks; whereas in last year's class, in which the children as a whole were more well-behaved, being a cut above meant especially that one was in constant pursuit of "extras." "Extras" were, of course, not ignored this year--indeed, as I have stated, going beyond routine requirements was one of the defining characteristics of the model student--but the weight which was placed on "extras" did not equal the weight which was placed on them in last year's class. Thus Josh and Scott could remain model students despite their somewhat unenthusiastic participation in the Zing from Zato story game.

This kind of variation on themes holds for all the identity types. Take, for example, the chronic behavior problem. If the essence of being a model student is being a cut above one's fellow classmates, the essence of being a chronic behavior problem is being a cut below one's fellow students in all areas, both academic and behavioral. But again, as with the model student, what this looked like from year to year changed. In last year's class, there was no one who could compare with either Jarrod, Shane, or Pat M.--there was no one who misbehaved and ignored tasks as consistently or was as disruptive as any of these boys. Just as the model students of this year's class were not as exceptional as those of last year's class, so the chronic behavior problems of that class were not as diabolic as those of this year's class. Each class was unique, and had its own version of model students and of chronic behavior problem students (as well as of the other types).

Identity types, then, hold across school years as themes; what holds them together is not point by point attribute correspondences, but family resemblances (Wittgenstein). In addition to reflecting commonalities, such as "being into extras" or "misbehaving," those family resemblances reflect similarities in structural position. Thus whoever is at the top will be the model student of the year, whoever lags behind academically will be the academic problem, whoever acts up the most will be the behavior problem, etc. At the top, lagging behind, and acting up the most, however, imply relationships with others--relationships that will define what it means to be at the top, to be lagging behind, or to be acting up the most--and it is the nature of these particular relationships which determines the unique variations of identity themes in each classroom.

On Definition in Relation to Others

As we have seen, the meaning of identity types changes from year to year. A corollary of this is that the meaning of any given identity type in a classroom is inextricably tied with the meanings of the other identity types present in the room. Groups of children, then, are characterized in relation to other groups of children, and what is distinctive about each group will tie in or contrast with what is distinctive about one or more of the other groups.

The example of Josh and Scott, used above, applies here as well. Again, these students had characteristics which would be considered "good" in any class, but they took on their modelness in this class, in relation to this particular group of children. First of all, and on a general level, this year's class was, on the whole, not as intelligent or enthusiastic as last year's class--they did not have the same kind of positive attitude towards learning as last year's class. This was evidenced on the one hand by the way in which the students participated in events like the Zing from Zato story game, and on the other hand by the difficulties the children had with learning routines and following directions. For instance, the following is a summary of a conversation I had with Mr. Fairley on the topic of directions:

> He (said) . . . that this is an "impossible" class--they don't listen to directions. It's as if they never heard about directions before. (Mr. Fairley) said that he has never seen anything like this before--and it's not just group three people either (the lower reading group)--all of the kids are like this. I asked (Mr. Fairley) if he had any kinds of similar problems last year at this point and he said no: "In fact, they were eager to do it on their own." What's worse than not listening to directions is their attitude: they don't seem to care if they learn or not. (fieldnote notes, 10/2/83)

Since the class was less weighted at the top, so to speak, than last year's class (8/27/84), Josh's and Scott's behaviors, such as listening to Mr. Fairley, always doing their work the right way, going along with rather than interrupting the flow of events, and pursuing extra interests, tended to stand out all the more: their model-like characteristics were defined as such because so few children in the class possessed them.

Not only did few children in the class possess model-like characteristics; there were also children who possessed extreme problem-like characteristics, such as never listening to Mr. Fairley, constantly interrupting the flow of events, etc. Thus it was not just the scarcity of model-like characteristics that gave Josh and Scott such high placement--it was also the presence of opposite characteristics. The presence of a Shane in the class, for instance, heightened Josh's modelness, just as the presence of a Josh in the class heightened Shane's problemness--i.e., in comparison with each other, Josh did always do everything right, and Shane did always do everything wrong.

Indeed, Josh and Shane often served as a contrast set for Mr. Fairley. For instance, when discussing student motivation, Mr. Fairley made the following statement:

> When I see Shane not working, since I know he's not assuming responsibility, I've gotta constantly remind him, cause I know he won't go back to his task. But I never say anything to Josh. (interview, 3/16/84)

The contrasts between gets-his-work-done versus never-does-his-work, and self-motivated versus no sense of purpose are clear here; what is important is that, in a conversation about motivation, Josh and Shane were invoked as examples of opposing tendencies.

Josh and Shane were also used as a contrast set in discussions about social class and social class values. This is evident in the following statement, in which Mr. Fairley negates differences in ethnicity to accentuate differences in class:

> I can look at, say, Josh and Tamika, and say the only difference between the two is the color of their skin. But they are both hard workers, they're both pretty well-behaved, they're both nice kids. They both have values, they both take care of things . . . They have the same values except for the color of the skin . . . When it comes to values, you look at Shane and Josh and say, well, they're the same except for their economic status, and . . . no, right away you know that's not the same . . . They have a completely different set of values. And I think those kinds of things, not only are they hard to overcome, I don't know if you can. I mean, how can I say, oh yeah, I have to look at both little boys and they both have the same values? Well, I know they don't. (interview, 5/4/84)

A more specific example of a contrast of values can be found in the following statement, in which Mr. Fairley contrasts Josh's family with that of Jarrod, another chronic behavior problem student:

> Then last week, I sent a note home about being clean and neat, and I mentioned that at every conference, especially the first one. About how important it is that the child be clean and neat, and the way that other children see them, and the way that I see them. And yet Jarrod comes filthy to school . . . I mean, Josh's mother will read that note, but she didn't need to read that. It was meant for Jarrod, and Jarrod's mother doesn't read it, or doesn't follow up on it. (interview, 6/13/84)

The model and chronic behavior problem students served as a contrast set even in our discussions about future school careers: "You can predict the kids like Shane and Jarrod (i.e., they will do badly), and you can predict that Josh will probably be a good student in high school" (interview, 6/13/84). Finally, Josh and Shane served as a contrast set in the day to day life of the classroom as well. For instance, when Shane got into trouble during lunch on 3/27/84, Mr. Fairley sent Josh to the office to get the disciplinary papers for Shane (fieldnotes, 3/27/84).

These kinds of contrasts held with regard to other groups of children as well. The model and above average students, for instance, were contrasted with each other in terms of productivity; although both groups of children shared high levels of intelligence, they differed in their levels of productivity, and it was that latter difference which served to define Josh and Scott as model students, and Jeremy, Jonny, Becky, and Pat M. as only above average students. Furthermore, that all six students were seen to be either above average or model was determined not only by how smart they were per se, but by how smart they were in comparison with the rest of the students in the class. Similarly, what made

Pat S., Chris, Margie, and Tonya academic problems was not only their individual difficulties with particular tasks, but also the level of difficulty they experienced when compared with the levels of difficulty experienced by the average, above average, or model students. In the same way, the behavior problem students must be seen as being defined as such in relation to the behavior patterns of all the students in the class, with the episodic behavior problems and chronic behavior problems defining each other further in terms of differences in gender, and in the degree and type of misbehavior.

The examples of contrasts given here serve only to indicate the range of contrasts possible. The point is that in all cases, the students were evaluated and judged not only as against themselves, but also within the context of the class as a whole. This took the form of both grouping together on the basis of family resemblances, and of splitting off on the basis of differences, with each process aiding the other.

On attributes as differentially important for different students. It seems evident from the above that the students in Mr. Fairley's class were not judged, or placed, as against one static set of criteria: although all the children were considered in terms of their work habits, behavior patterns, personality traits, and relationships with peers, these criteria did not make up a set scale which, depending on their particular combination in any given student, assigned that student to a specific category.

Rather, different attributes were important in differing degrees for different students.

Reading ability, for example, was not given equal emphasis across all students. It was very salient for Mr. Fairley when considering Pat S. and Chris (viewing session, 3/6/84), but not very salient when considering students like Josh. Indeed, Josh's status as a good reader was almost taken for granted by both Mr. Fairley and myself, and thus rarely came up in our conversations.[33] Although Mr. Fairley was concerned about the reading abilities of all his students, reading was more of a problem for some students than for others, and the reading abilities of the problem readers had more salience for him. This seems to corroborate the notion that much of what teachers attend to is that which presents them with a problem: "in these 'problem' situations it is the discrepant phenomenon that becomes figure while the more normal phenomena are taken as ground, and often go unnoticed." (TWS Progress Report, March, 1983, p. L-6). With the limited amount of time available to help children with their reading skills, a good reader gives the teacher one less thing to think about, and she/he can divert her or his attention to those students who really need it.

Social class is another example of an attribute which was important for some students but not for others. As I have shown, social class was very important for Mr. Fairley when considering students like Shane and Jarrod and when comparing them with other, "better" students, such as Josh. Shane, and Jarrod, however, were not the only students in the class with lower class backgrounds.

It was because Shane and Jarrod stood out in so many ways--in their dress, the way they talked, etc.--that their social class backgrounds became visible and salient for Mr. Fairley.

Part II. Mr. Fairley, Year One: A Comparison

As noted in the "discussion section" of Part I, identity types do not look like and mean the same thing across school years. Each year's class consists of a unique group of students, which is in some ways similar and in many ways different from other groups of students during other years. Teachers also change from year to year, and depending on the particular group of students with whom they are working, priorities and foci may change. Finally, the circumstances under which teachers are teaching may also change from year to year, having an additional impact on a teacher's priorities, and on how she or he sees, makes sense of, and constructs classroom life.

The research project of which this study is a part enabled me to work with Mr. Fairley not only during the 1983-84 school year, but also during the second half of the 1982-83 school year. This presented a unique opportunity to observe changes in the ways in which Mr. Fairley made sense of students and events in his classroom from year to year. The two years were very different for Mr. Fairley. As noted in the introduction to Part I, Mr. Fairley was confronted in 1983-84 with a new school, a new reading program, and not only with a new set of students, but also with some new *types* of students. Despite his emphasis on curiosity, "extras," and going beyond the standard curriculum, these drastic changes in setting, program, and students precluded the full implementation of this philosophy of enthusiastic learning, and forced Mr. Fairley instead to focus on issues of management and control.

The 1982-83 school year, in contrast, was one in which "extras" and high level learning experiences predominated over management issues. Again, as noted in the introduction to Part I, during this school year Mr. Fairley was working with a familiar curriculum in a school in which he had taught for seven years. Furthermore, not only was he well-acquainted with most of his students before the school year even began, but the students were, for the most part, intelligent, enthusiastic, and highly responsive to Mr. Fairley's teaching strategies.

In what follows, I present an in-depth discussion of some of the key themes of classroom life during the 1982-83 school year. This will be followed by a brief discussion of the identity types in Mr. Fairley's room during this year. When compared with Part I of the study, it is clear that each school year is unique, reflecting particular students' and teachers' active constructions of classroom cultures under unique circumstances.

Wise Choices

During an interview on 2/24/83, Mr. Fairley talked about the importance of "giving the kids the chance to do things on their own":

> They need that opportunity. I like to think that the best learning comes when children know what they want to do and and are doing it--making their own choice. That's the first. The second's when they're sitting here in the (reading) group because then it's more structured, focused

> in on something, and we're learning something. Third is when they're sitting at their seat. . . . They don't have any help. If they get something wrong, they don't know why it's wrong. (interview, 2/24/83)

One way in which this philosophy was implemented was through "wise choices," an event during which the children were either given a range of activities to choose from, or left to their own devices.

"Wise choices" was an event category recognized by all the participants in Mr. Fairley's classroom.[34] Mr. Fairley would occasionally refer to it by name, with such statements as "I want you to make wise choices after you finish your work" (fieldnotes, 3/10/83). Students, too, referred to it by name, as, for example, when Doug asked, "Can we do 'wise choices'?" (fieldnotes, 5/4/83).

Mr. Fairley's reply to Doug's inquiry--"No, you're gonna do _my_ choices (fieldnotes, 5/4/83), points to wise choices as a truly student centered event. In this sense, "wise choices" connects with both the importance of extras, and with the emphasis placed on students being responsible for their work, and for getting help when they need it.

There were gradations, however, in the degree to which "wise choices" was truly student-centered--in other words, in the degree to which Mr. Fairley relinquished classroom control--as well as limits to what counted as wise choices. At one end of the spectrum, "wise choices" looked like an event during which the children had absolute freedom to engage in any activity of their choice. Again, Mr. Fairley's direction to "make wise choices after you finish your work" (fieldnotes, 3/10/83), lacks explicit reference to limitations on what kinds of activities the students could engage in. On another occasion, Mr. Fairley gave the following set of directions: "Two things I'd like you to do this morning. Number one, SRA. Two, if you'd like to decorate your folder, you can--*or if you want to do anything else* read, write--you can do that" (fieldnotes, 6/6/83; emphasis added). Finally, one day, when Mr. Fairley was giving the students time to catch up on their handwriting assignments, he addressed those who were already finished: "Get something out that you'd like to do and do it" (fieldnotes, 5/6/83).

These examples seemed to best fit Mr. Fairley's philosophy that "the best learning comes when children know what they want to do and are doing it" (interview, 2/24/83). Students were not told what to do, but were given the opportunity, and were expected, to pursue their own interests. However, just as "wise choices" was an event category shared by all participants, there also seemed to be a shared understanding of what the "wise" in "wise choices" meant. This is particularly evident in the above quote--". . . or if you want to do anything else *read, write*--you can do that" (fieldnotes, 6/6/83, emphasis added). "Wise choices," then, did not mean that students could do *anything*. During "wise choices" students were above all expected to be scholarly, and for the most part, they were. During these events, most students read, wrote, worked on the computer, and occasionally drew. The choice lay in *whether* to read, write, work on the computer, etc., and in *what* to read, write, etc.

Of the 22 occasions during which I observed "wise choices," six were of the most "open" variety described above--children were simply told to find something that they wanted to do and do it. Five of the remaining 16 occasions were of the "intermediate" variety, during which Mr. Fairley would place some explicit restrictions on what the students could do. On one occasion, for instance, the morning assignment for the two lower reading groups was to read. They were told that they could read whatever they wanted, but that they had to read at least one story. The point, Mr. Fairley said, was "to get in a good morning's worth of reading" (fieldnotes, 2/15/83). The most frequent kind of intermediate "wise choices," however, occurred during library time. Each week, when it was time to go to the library, Mr. Fairley let the students choose whether they wanted to go or not. Although they were given the option of staying in the classroom, they were expected to use the time to work. On one occasion, Mr. Fairley told the class that everyone had to go to the library, "not unless you're gonna stay here and work, really work" (fieldnotes, 3/11/83). On another occasion, he said, "If you're not working, go" (fieldnotes, 3/25/83).

The remaining 11 instances of "wise choices" were considerably more restricted than the open and intermediate varieties. During these occasions, students made choices, but between a limited and specified set of activities. Most frequently, the students were permitted to choose which of two or three assignments to complete. For instance, they could choose what kinds of math problems to do on the computer (fieldnotes, 2/23/83), whether to do handwriting or SRA (fieldnotes, 3/24/83), or whether to work on reading folders or join the reading groups (fieldnotes, 2/28/83). On other occasions, children were given a writing topic, but were then permitted to modify it slightly. For instance, on 4/29/83, Mr. Fairley gave a "rites of spring" assignment. When a student asked if he could write about a different season, Mr. Fairley said "yes," adding that things always change a bit depending on who's working on it--the point was simply to write about the feelings that accompany a change in the seasons (fieldnotes, 4/29/83).

An important aspect of this kind of wise choice event was that students were expected to choose on the basis of their desires and needs and then stick to their choice. For instance, after the class was given a choice between a writing assignment and a series of other tasks, one student, Brad, told Mr. Fairley that he changed his mind--he didn't want to write anymore. Mr. Fairley said he was sorry, but Brad had to stick with his choice (fieldnotes, 3/29/83). It is for this reason that I have included this more restricted kind of choice event in the category of "wise choices." Students were expected to think about their choices, and then see them through to completion.

Student Responsibility

"Wise choices" illustrates two of the major themes in Mr. Fairley's classroom. First, as noted above, it reflects one aspect of Mr. Fairley's teaching philosophy--that classrooms should be equipped (both in terms of materials and time) to provide students with opportunities to explore their own interests. The second theme illustrated by "wise choices" also reflects an aspect of Mr. Fairley's teaching philosophy, namely, that students need to take their interests seriously, and that they need to be serious about their pursuit of these interests. This latter point falls under the broader notion that students are to be held explicitly responsible, within certain limits, for their own learning.

Aside from district-mandated learning goals, reflected in the two sets of standardized tests the students were required to take during the school year, Mr. Fairley did not have a standardized program which each child was expected to fulfill in exactly the same way. Everyone had to read, learn particular math skills, learn cursive writing, etc., to be sure. But within those boundaries and within the practical press of everyday life in the classroom--which meant coordinating the activities of 23 children--Mr. Fairley worked to tailor each child's program to her/his needs. His goal was not to take a heterogeneous group of students at the beginning of the year and turn them into a homogeneous group, each with the same skills and abilities, by the end of the year. Rather, his focus was on motivating each child to develop and improve her or his skills and thinking abilities to their fullest potential. This focus is illustrated by a comment Mr. Fairley made about the gap between students across the school year:

> . . . the better teacher you are, the greater that gap will be . . . I argued with a teacher who once said, 'Well, if you're a great teacher, then the lower child will close the gap.' And I said, 'No, if you're a great teacher, the gap

> will get much, much larger because as you teach every child to the best of their ability, you have a child at the top who can move six grades in one year and a child on the bottom who, if you're not a good teacher, maybe they move a quarter of a year, if you're a great teacher they move half of a year. That's what differences in people mean, so the gap gets worse, not better. (interview, 3/7/83)

This emphasis on attending to each student as an individual with particular skills, weaknesses, or interests, in addition to seeing each student in relation to the other students in the room, meant, again, that not all students were expected to do the same amount or quality of work. Where one student needed to do 50 math problems in order to master a particular skill, another needed to do only 25; likewise, Mr. Fairley had different expectations with regard to the number of work sheets turned in, stories read, and quantity and quality of writing (fieldnote notes 2/23/85). The only standard was that each student do their best. This added, of course, to Mr. Fairley's workload, as he pointed out during a discussion of his tendency to interrupt planned lessons in order to accommodate students questions:

> I choose of my own free will to make it a very difficult job in that I accept questions as much as I possibly can. I like the kids to do lots of different things, and that, of course, puts a heavy burden on me to be able to keep track of all the different things that are going [on]. (interview, 3/7/83) 35

This flexibility, or openness, put an additional burden on the students as well. One of Mr. Fairley's mottos was that "children do better work when you expect things from them" (interview, 3/7/83). This motto held not only in terms of expecting students to do their best on worksheets, for instance, but also in terms of expecting students to explicitly take some responsibility for their own learning. This expectation of responsibility held at all levels, from the most basic, rudimentary tasks to the highest level tasks.

At bottom, Mr. Fairley expected his students to take responsibility for following directions; in particular, he did not want them to be dependent on him to interpret each set of worksheet directions. This was made clear by the increasing frequency with which he handed out worksheets without going over directions, and by his periodic lectures when children complained that they didn't know what to do. On one occasion, for instance, Mr. Fairley told his Group 1 readers that they had to make the transition from getting directions from adults to reading and understanding them on their own (fieldnotes, 1/17/83).[36]

In addition to students being responsible for reading and listening to directions, Mr. Fairley also expected his students (again, within certain limits) to correct their own work (he also expected some of the better students to correct work that Mr. Fairley himself usually corrected), and to gauge their own progress and bring their needs for extra help to his attention. This was particularly true with regard to math work, and took the form not only of statements like "Michael, if you don't understand, I really need you to ask questions," but also more general comments, such as "You're gonna have to help me figure out if you need a little extra help," or "You have to let me know . . . and then we can decide how much extra help you need" (fieldnotes, 3/11/83). This expectation held in other academic areas as well: students were expected to seek Mr. Fairley out if they needed help[37] and were even, on occasion, expected to make appointments to see him (fieldnotes, 3/25/83).

A six-week math contest serves to illustrate the workings of student responsibility. Toward the end of February, Mr. Fairley put several math tests on one of the bulletin boards, one each on addition, subtraction, and multiplication. The children were told that if they got 100% on all three tests, they would be taken to McDonald's for lunch. They were to practice on their own, and could take the tests at their own pace (tests were given each week during library time). The motivator was, of course, the lunch at McDonald's, but the responsibility for learning the material and taking the tests (which included not only the expectation that they pace themselves and ask for any necessary help, but also the assumption that they not cheat), lay entirely with the students.

Student responsibility, or active participation, also held at "higher" levels. This was made evident in the section on "wise choices," an event during which the students were expected to seriously pursue their own (scholarly) interests. Occasionally, this active participation took the form of student requests to alter a particular assignment in light of time constraints, requests which Mr. Fairley consented to (fieldnotes 4/20/83, 6/10/83).

In addition to having students take on responsibilities with regard to particular tasks, Mr. Fairley also had the students spend time thinking about themselves as responsible students. For instance, on 3/25/83 Mr. Fairley gave the class the following writing assignment: "Surely you have done some thinking about becoming a better student (scholar) and a nicer person. Tell about the improvements you've made. List at least five improvements you've made and then list the things you are still working on and how you might make improvements."

Finally, the atmosphere in the room as a whole was one which encouraged both active participation and responsibility for one's behavior. This is reflected particularly in Mr. Fairley's approach to discipline. Mr. Fairley frequently made rules (e.g., seatwork students were not permitted to interrupt him while he was running reading groups), and he often had to remind students to sit down, be quiet, listen, etc. But the rules were never adhered to consistently. Management was simply not the most important issue for Mr. Fairley. This was made clear to me early on, as the following exerpt from my notes indicates:

> (Mr. Fairley) talked a bit about how unruly the class was today. He said that he doesn't want to pile them down with work (so they can pursue their own interests), but that he doesn't want them to talk so much either. He said that if he started the class in a strict way from the beginning of the year, and ran it that way all through the year, he'd have an orderly class, but he would end up with children that weren't so interested in learning. (fieldnote notes, 2/28/83)

Or in his own words:

> I know at the end of the year what things went very poorly and need to be improved for next year and I know every year I say, 'Oh, I'm going to try and have them a little quieter,' but it never works because I'm not committed to having them quieter. (interview, 3/7/83)

This did not mean that Mr. Fairley was willing to tolerate pandemonium; rather, the goal was to be flexible enough in his discipline that it didn't put a damper on the learning environment in the room--discipline was not an end in itself, but only a means for the enhancement of learning. The one sign Mr. Fairley had on the wall relating to discipline underscores this point:

DO

1) make wise choices
2) work quietly & neatly
3) read a book
4) extra work
5) sit quietly in reading group

DON'T

1) talk without permission
2) save seats
3) act funny when your class needs you to act scholarly
4) ask help person unneeded questions
5) get drinks during reading groups
6) get up without permission

Again, and as with all other rules, these rules were not held to consistently. As long as students were relatively quiet and did not disturb other students, they were able to avoid reprimand. To some degree, then, students learned to act responsibly and appropriately on their own.

At all levels of organization, then, and in all academic areas, students were encouraged to be active participants, and were expected to take on the responsibilities that came with that privilege.

Cultivating Enthusiasm and Thoughtfulness

In the previous two sections, I presented a view of a classroom in which students were given as much room as possible to pursue their own interests. Above all, I have demonstrated that Mr. Fairley provided his students with time. But Mr. Fairley provided more than time; he also worked to provide materials and mental guides for his students--to introduce them to areas and ways of thought.

If there is one word which can capture the general atmosphere in Mr. Fairley's classroom--as well as his primary teaching goal--it is thoughtfulness. Above all, Mr. Fairley wanted his students to learn how to think. This became evident during the second week of observation, as indicated by the following notes on an after-school conversation with Mr. Fairley:

> (Mr. Fairley) talked about the importance of teaching the children not just things, but how to learn . . . (He) doesn't seem to be interested in anything that's standardized; nor is he satisfied with just making sure the children learn the minimum--what they have to know to pass the tests. He seems more interested in tapping the children's curiosity and in prodding them to explore things on their own. (fieldnote notes, 2/17/83)

On a later date, I noted that "(Mr. Fairley) said that it's important for children to learn how to stop and think about things--not just to do things to get them done" (fieldnote notes, 3/29/83).

This emphasis on thoughtfulness--on really thinking about and exploring things--came out in interviews as well. In one interview, for instance, Mr. Fairley emphasized the importance of teaching children "to keep their eyes open all the time and always be looking for things in all different ways" (interview, 3/7/83). He then went on to say that one of the most important aspects of teaching is.

> . . . getting children to be aware of everything that happens in their world, and know that everything is interrelated. There are very few things in this world that are complete--a complete separate process in isolation from everything else--and yet some children do their school work like . . . school work is completely isolated from all other knowledge. (interview, 3/7/83)

The following rather lengthy interview excerpt illustrates Mr. Fairley's philosophy of learning, and thus his felt need to have the children go beyond the standard curriculum:

> I think 90% of your job is motivating. I think it's natural for children to want to learn, but it's not natural for children to want to get into books as early as we force them in schools. I think that we probably would be better off just going on tons and tons of field trips . . . if we had a little one-room school house in the woods, maybe we could spend many, many days finding and exploring the woods and the things you could see. If we were extremely wealthy, we'd have our own little private jet and we could fly from place to place each day; you know, like today, instead of talking about the Everglades, or talking about moun -tains . . . we could just go and see them. I think that would be the natural way for a child to learn--it's not natural for them to take a book and start wanting to learn about it. But, we've committed ourselves to doing that at a fairly young age, so now we need a little help in getting them to do that. (interview, 3/7/83)

Or, as he later put it more succinctly: "Kids remember a lot of things. It's the boring stuff that they forget real fast" (interview, 2/24/83).

Mr. Fairley, then, did not want to teach only phonics, cursive writing, and addition--he wanted to teach thinking and learning. He did not want his students to just complete tasks--he wanted them to think about the tasks, to incorporate them into their lives, connect them with other tasks, build on them, and move beyond them. This goal, however, necessitated that the standard curriculum be enriched and built upon. In what follows, I will discuss three of the means by which Mr. Fairley accomplished this: writing assignments, reading materials and questions, and group discussions.

Writing Assignments. In an interview in February, Mr. Fairley expressed his frustration with handwriting practice:

> I shudder . . . I hear teachers talk about (how) we really need to work a lot on handwriting. There was a teacher here a few years ago who would show them . . . handwriting. They never once all year wrote their own thoughts. They were always copied from the book. The whole year they had beautiful handwriting, and it's very showy when it goes home and the parents look at this beautiful handwriting--they think, 'Oh boy, they really now what they're doing.' And then you realize that it's not their own content . . . Yet . . . you don't send home papers kids write that are their own without a lot of explanation, because the words are misspelled, the handwriting is terrible. But it's the thought that's in it. And so to spend an inordinate amount of time on cursive handwriting or printing without it being something the children are learning is ludicrous and a waste of time. (interview, 2/24/83)

Mr. Fairley did have his students do standard handwriting practice, because, as he said, "I don't want to send a kid into the third grade next year and have the teacher say, 'Didn't you teach those kids cursive handwriting?'" (interview, 2/24/83). These exercises most often took the form of copying fill-in-the-blank sentences or a poem off the board. With the poems, however, Mr. Fairley often pushed his students to go one step beyond simply copying the poem, as is illustrated by the following examples:

1. On 3/1/83, Mr. Fairley asked his students to copy the following poem off the board:

   People Keep Saying

   People keep saying it's not good to learn
     Things by heart, but if you don't have
     Things by heart, what are you going to have to
       think about when you lie awake and can't sleep at
       night?
   Pretty things that are well said--it's nice to have them
   in your heart.

   (R. Frost)

   Mr. Fairley told the class that he expected them to copy the poem exactly as it was written on the board, with the same indentations, capital letters, and punctuation. He then asked the children what 'by heart' means. The children began to list off some things they knew by heart--math facts, spelling, etc. Mr. Fairley stopped them, saying, 'These are all information things. Let's talk about other things you know by heart'--things they like to remember, such as favorite sayings. The children then listed off things that they like to know by heart. Before reiterating the details of copying the poem, Mr. Fairley told the students that 'I'd like you to share some of those things you know by heart in your journals'. (fieldnotes, 3/1/83)

2. On 3/7/83, Mr. Fairley read the class a poem entitled 'The Cremation of Sam McGee.' The poem ends when the narrator opens the door of a burning boat, only to see Sam McGee sit up, smile, and tell him to close the door to keep the cold out. The students were given the following exerpt to copy:

   The Northern Lights have seen queer sights
   But the queerest they ever did see
   Was the night on the barge of Lake LeBarge
   I cremated Sam McGee.

   In addition to copying the excerpt, the students were to draw a picture about it. To get them thinking, Mr. Fairley asked, 'Now, what kinds of things could you put in your picture?' As the children made suggestions (boat, dog-sled, dead person), Mr. Fairley wrote them on the board. The brainstorming continued for several minutes, until a student asked if the story was true. Rather than giving a direct answer, Mr. Fairley asked the class what they thought, and then took them through each section of the poem, asking them what they thought was true and what wasn't. The discussion ended when Mr. Fairley reminded the students to do their handwriting carefully, and assigned two students the job of handing out paper. (fieldnotes, 3/7/83)

3. On 3/24/83 the children were given the following handwriting assignment:

   A kite, a sky, and a good firm breeze
   And acres of ground away from trees,
   And one hundred yards of clean strong string--
   Oh boy, oh boy! I call that spring!

   Students were given the option of either copying the poem and then working on SRAs, or copying the poem and then drawing a picture about it and writing a paragraph on what spring meant to them. (fieldnotes 3/24/83)

In each of the above examples, the students were not only required to do a good job of copying the handwriting from the board; they were also asked to do a little extra--to think about what it meant to them, and to relate it to their own lives.

In addition to building on handwriting practice--to making it more meaningful, perhaps--Mr. Fairley also gave his students writing assignments in which thinking took precedence over correctness. This emphasis on thinking writing and its connections with the basics of what second graders are expected to learn is illustrated by the following notation from my fieldnotes:

> (Mr. Fairley) stressed that writing becomes more and more important as time goes on: it helps the children to read better and to organize their thoughts. It also teaches them to think about what they think and feel. (Mr. Fairley) thinks this latter point is crucial, which is why he gives them writing assignments that apply directly to their lives. He mentioned that teachers don't give their children these kinds of writing assignments because it takes too much time to go over them. (Mr. Fairley) thinks it's worth the time--and besides, it's interesting. For instance, Brad used the word 'neophyte' in his paper yesterday ('I am a neophyte artist'); although he used it in a funny way, it shows his knowledge of homonyms and shows that he thinks about words. (fieldnote notes, 4/22/83)

On the most general level, Mr. Fairley encouraged his students to write by having them make and keep journals, beginning early in February. The journals belonged to the students, and although Mr. Fairley occasionally provided them with topics, especially at the beginning (fieldnotes, 2/9/83), students were free to choose their own topics--Mr. Fairley's suggestions were usually meant to be used only if a child did not have something specific in mind.

Again, however, Mr. Fairley felt that his students needed some prodding. They needed to be given things to think about, which they could then explore and build upon on their own. For this purpose, Mr. Fairley devised writing assignments on specific topics.[38]

The following list of writing assignments, given between February and June, illustrates the variety of topics given, and serves to underscore the emphasis placed on serious thought and creativity.

1. Write about which things you like about yourself and which you'd like to change, and explain why (fieldnotes, 2/9/83). This was a journal assignment.

2. Mr. Fairley put a series of prints (Monet, Renoir, Van Gogh) around the room. Students were to pick a print and write about what they thought was happening in the picture, and how they felt about it: "They make you think about things." (fieldnotes, 2/17/83)

3. All groups: Surely you have done some thinking about becoming a better student (scholar) and a nicer person. Tell about the improvements you've made. List at least five improvements you've made and then list the things you are still working on and how you might make improvements. (Written on the board, fieldnotes, 3/25/83)

4. Learning to philosophize assignment. Write down some things that you're curious about that you could find an answer to, and some things that you could never really find an answer to. (On the board: 1) Things that can be easily discovered; 2) Things that you can spend a lifetime searching for Feelings-Facts). (fieldnotes, 3/29/83)

5. "I am" writing assignment. For this assignment, students had to write a series of sentences about themselves, listing their unique characteristics, their place in their family history, their hopes for the future, etc. Mr. Fairley put his own version of the assignment on the wall. (fieldnotes, 4/29/83)

6. Rites of spring assignment. In part 1, "Rites and Ceremonies," students were to write about "something that happens over and over again" that marks the beginning of spring--repetitious things that one doesn't stop to think about. In part 2, "Discoveries and Revelations," students were to write about things that aren't repeated each spring--things that one does stop to think about.

> Again, Mr. Fairley had his own version of this assignment on the wall. (fieldnotes, 4/29/83)

7. Write about what you will remember about this school 40 years from now. (fieldnotes, 5/6/83)

8. Friday the 13th writing assignment. Write about an experiment that has gone bad (fieldnotes, 5/16/83)

9. End-of-the-Year Report: (fieldnotes, 6/6/83)

   - What important things have you learned this year?
   - What special things has Mr. Fairley done for you this year?
   - What special things have you done for Mr. Fairley this year?
   - What have you learned about making and keeping friends?
   - What things have been particularly interesting to you this year?
   - What do you wish that you could have done a better job at this year?
   - What advice would you give to the new students coming to Mr. Fairley's class next year so that they will have a great year?
   - What advice would you give to Mr. Fairley so that he can do a better job of teaching you next year?
   - What is the best thing that Mr. Fairley has done for you this year?
   - On a separate piece of paper, write a note to Mr. Fairley.
     (I will save this note all of my life, so make it the best that you have ever written.)

Thinking writing was encouraged not only by assigning interesting and provocative topics, but also by the way in which Mr. Fairley interacted with his students while they were writing. (This usually occurred in blocks of 20-30 minutes and occasionally spanned several days.) I will use the "learning to philosophize" assignment as an example.

> Mr. Fairley began by telling the class that he had been reading a book called "Learning to Philosophize," that gave him some ideas for a writing assignment. Pulling from these ideas, he wanted the children to "write down some things that you're curious about and that you could find an answer to, and those that you could never really find an answer to." He explained that certain questions can be answered by reading books, by asking other people, or by looking for oneself,

but that there are other questions one could spend a lifetime thinking about without ever really finding an answer. He then turned on the overhead projector, on which he had written:

1) Things that can be easily discovered.

2) Things that you can spend a lifetime searching for.
   Feelings-Facts.

Mr. Fairley emphasized that, for the second part of the assignment, he wanted the students to write about "the kinds of things that we could never agree on"--feelings, what makes a nice person, etc. "A good philosopher," he said, "is a person who thinks about things." Mr. Fairley pointed out that this assignment was an appropriate continuation of last week's assignment (goals for self-improvement), and after giving some practical advice on how to approach the assignment (such as moving back and forth between two categories rather than working on each one separately), he told the class that he wanted "nothing else done for the next 20 minutes except this writing assignment," stressing once again that he expected them to write about things they were really curious about.

The children began to complain--"I don't get it," I don't know what to write about," "I can't think of anything." Mr. Fairley replied, "I don't want you to say that you don't know what to do before you even start," gave them a little more practical advice, and told them that he would continue to talk and give them ideas while they wrote. He began by asking questions: What makes you happy? What do you think you'll be like in 10 years? What makes people beautiful? 39 As the children wrote and asked more questions, Mr. Fairley expanded on some of these points: "What makes a beautiful person--inside, not outside? You could spend a lifetime thinking about that." "It's important to set aside some time in your life to think about what makes you happy and what doesn't make you happy."

Mr. Fairley's questions and examples helped to lessen the student's complaints, but one student, David A., continued to complain. He claimed repeatedly that he didn't have anything to put in the second category. "David, I feel sorry for you," Mr. Fairley said, and then went on to point out that he was creating a mental block. "Being curious is one of the things that makes us human." Mr. Fairley then addressed the entire class, telling them that they have to take time to think, that they shouldn't just write anything. Several minutes before ending the writing time, Mr. Fairley gave the students one final question to think about: "Suppose you had a genius standing in front of the class and you could ask him anything you wanted. What would you ask him?" (fieldnotes, 3/29/83)

As can be seen from this vignette, not only the writing topics, but the writing sessions themselves were thought provoking. These sessions were far from quiet; rather, they were characterized by a constant questioning and exchange of ideas. Students alternately complained, acted confused, and became enthused, while Mr. Fairley alternated between giving practical advice, answering questions, and prodding the students with questions of his own.

Writing (both printing, and especially cursive, which was new to the children), was something the students in Mr. Fairley's classroom had to learn to do. But learning to print and do cursive were not for Mr. Fairley ends in themselves, but tools to be used in learning to explore and express thoughts. The motto "Read to Learn" here takes the form of "write to think."

Reading Materials and Questions

In an interview in early March, Mr. Fairley discussed his approach to reading:

> . . . at least 50% of my reading program is geared toward things that I think they should be able to do, and that is be able to read something and to know what they've read, and to be able to make inferences and draw conclusions from the reading, to be able to take that information in, use it to . . . help problem solve in other areas, to be able to combine information that they've read with information that they know, to be able to trace out a new path that is a reflection of what they know and what they've learned
>
> . . . I think that's what it means to grow and to be educatedit means to use the information you've got in a meaningful way. So, we've struggled because much of the material we use in the class is not very meaningful, also the reading books aren't very meaningful. But you don't have much choice--we have to live within the realities of a budget and a school district that is very large and very structured. (interview, 3/7/83)

There were several ways in which Mr. Fairley worked to enhance the reading program, to make it more meaningful and relevant. First, and on the most general level, Mr. Fairley worked to make reading something which was not done only in reading groups. In addition to their weekly trips to the school library, Mr. Fairley occasionally took the children on "field trips" to the local town library. Mr. Fairley also had a wide range of books available in the classroom itself, which the students were encouraged to browse through at their leisure during "wise choices," free time, or during the free reading period which took place after lunch each day.

With regard to the reading program proper, Mr. Fairley used three tactics to make it better suit his goals and the children's needs. The first of these was to choose stories that were both relevant and meaningful. Mr. Fairley felt that although nonsense stories can be fun, they don't do much to spur students' interests (fieldnotes notes, 3/29/83). He therefore tried to "pick stories that, you know, once in awhile we read some real silly ones, but quite often you can find stories that have some real deep meaning in them and they can relate to them very easily." (interview 6/9/83 viewing session, date)

The second way in which Mr. Fairley worked to enhance the reading program was to depart from the teacher's manual: "I generally don't go near the motivation for the story it gives in the teacher's manual. I use my own things; so there are better ways" (interview, 2/24/83). Several weeks later, I wrote the following summary of a before-school conversation.

> (Mr. Fairley) talked about teaching reading. He said the problem with reading is that we cut it down into so many little parts. If we taught people how to speak, we'd probably have a lot of children who don't know how to speak. (Mr. Fairley) said that he had thought the teacher's manual would tell him how to teach reading, but then he realized that a child could learn everything in the book and still not know how to read. (fieldnote notes, 3/1/83)

Mr. Fairley, then, used his own methods to teach reading and comprehension. He was well enough acquainted with the reading program in general, and with the reading stories in particular that he rarely used a teacher's manual during reading group sessions. Questions on reading materials--both those asked during reading group sessions and those the children answered in written form in preparation for group meetings--were therefore usually of his own devising.

The questions Mr. Fairley had students write and think about prior to reading group sessions were a particularly important aspect of his strategy to make the reading materials relevant and to get the students to move beyond reading just to get the work done. On 8 of the 32 days during which I observed morning classes, Mr. Fairley began the day by assigning reading stories and questions. Students were expected to come to reading group sessions having read the stories in their entirety, and with written answers to the questions. On these days, comprehension was the focus of the group sessions. Students took turns reading their answers, discussing differences between their answers, and answering additional questions that Mr. Fairley asked as they went along.

The sets of reading questions, varying from 2 to 10 questions, consisted for the most part of questions relating to the content and sequence of events in the stories. On a story about Abraham Lincoln, for instance, Mr. Fairley asked, "After Abe's mother died, he had to teach himself to read. What two nice things happened to Abe to make reading a little easier?" and "Whom did Abe Lincoln marry?" (fieldnotes, 6/3/83) For another story, "The Lollipop Man," Mr. Fairley asked such questions as "What job did the Lollipop Man do?" and "Who was going to take the Lollipop Man's place?" (fieldnotes, 5/18/83)

Often, however, Mr. Fairley asked additional questions that went beyond content or sequence of events. Of the 21 sets of questions collected, these types of questions occurred in 11 of the sets.[40] Following are several examples of the types of questions asked:

1. For a story about Abraham Lincoln, students were asked to write a letter to President Reagan to "tell him what you think he should do to make the world a better place to live in." - Reading group 1. (fieldnote notes, 6/3/83)

2. For a story on whales, students were asked the following: "Pretend that you are going to write a letter to the President asking him to protect the whales. Write a letter giving your reasons why you think whales should be protected." - Reading Group 2. (fieldnotes, 1/17/83)

3. For a story in which the main character retires from his job as lollipop maker, students were asked, "Do you think that a person should have to retire at 70? Why or why not?" [41] Reading Group 3. (fieldnotes, 5/18/83)

4. For two stories on the harsh winter of 1936, Mr. Fairley assigned the following to Reading Group 1 members:

   - This story contains many exaggerations of the truth. On your paper make a list of the sentences that you read in which the truth has been exaggerated.

   - Make up an exaggeration of your own about the winter of 1936. It was so cold that . . . (fieldnotes, 2/25/83). [42]

Group Discussions and Fine Lines. As pointed out in the section on writing assignments, not only the topics, but the way in which they were talked about during writing sessions was crucial to the generation of thoughtfulness. A similar point may be made with respect to reading. Stories and written questions were thought-provoking in and of themselves, while discussions of the questions seemed to further stimulate and enhance this thoughtfulness. This process is illustrated by a discussion which took place during a reading group session on Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War.

> Early on the morning of 6/3/83, Reading Group 1 members were assigned two stories on Abraham Lincoln, along with the following set of questions to answer in written form prior to the group meeting:
>
> 1) Where was Abe's family moving from and where were they going?
> 2) What did the children do in the forest?
> 3) How did Abe help his father in the forest?
> 4) How did Abe learn to read?
> 5) After Abe's mother died he had to teach himself to read. What two nice things happened to Abe to make reading a little easier?
> 6) All his life Abe was glad about two things. What were they?
> 7) Lincoln moved to Illinois as a young man. Why did he move from Vandalia to Springfield?
> 8) Whom did Abe Lincoln marry?
> 9) Why do you think Abe Lincoln became president?
> 10) In a paragraph, write some advice to President Reagan. Tell him what you think he should do to make the world a better place to live in.
>
> When the group met two hours later, they began by going over some of the major themes in the stories. The children were confused about the difference between the Revolutionary and Civil Wars, so Mr. Fairley digressed to give them a short history lesson; when one student mentioned a Charlie Brown show on World War I that he had seen, Mr. Fairley incorporated World War I into the history lesson. 43
>
> As the group began going over their written responses to Mr. Fairley's questions, the discussion slowly moved to focus on what the U. S. was like during Lincoln's time. The students

> began to brainstorm and throw out suggestions--there were no cars, there were lots of animals, etc. When this topic was exhausted, Mr. Fairley steered the group to a discussion of their last question--the letter to Ronald Reagan on how to make the world a better place to live in. One student talked about the importance of safe and clean water. Mr. Fairley and the other group members nodded in agreement. Another student then suggested that all taxes be cut to $1.00 per person. Mr. Fairley grabbed onto this suggestion, and asked the group how many of them agreed. Some students nodded in agreement; others shrugged their shoulders unknowingly. Mr. Fairley then prodded the students to brainstorm about what kinds of things taxes provide for, and once again, students threw out suggestions--roads, schools, libraries, police. With this information in mind, the group decided that we should have "medium" taxes, and then went on to discuss how much tax different people should pay. The discussion ended when Mr. Fairley collected the students' written work and sent them back to their seats.

As with the writing assignments, emphasis was placed on talk about reading materials, and students were encouraged to bring in extra information and connect the readings with other topics they had thought about or were interested in. Mr. Fairley's emphasis on thoughtfulness, then, was not something which came out only in interviews; it was something which could be seen in the day-to-day doing of schooling in his classroom.

The emphasis on talk and discussion was a central aspect of Mr. Fairley's goal of providing a thoughtful and scholarly learning environment, and this warrants further examination here. For this purpose I turn to what Mr. Fairley and I called "fine line" discussions--events during which thoughtfulness and the generation of ideas reached a peak.

"Fine line" discussions. "Fine line" discussions were brief, large-group discussions during which students came as close to a "loss of control" as was possible without actually losing control, and during which the potential for learning was at its peak. During "fine lines," Mr. Fairley's attention was focused on the content as opposed to the process of talk; formal turn-taking procedures were temporarily suspended in favor of the spontaneous generation and free flow of ideas.

During an interview at the end of the year, Mr. Fairley referred to the importance of "bringing the kids right up to that fine line between . . . the point where they can participate but not go over the line to where they can't listen." (Viewing session, 6/3/83). On another occasion, I noted the following in my fieldnotes:

> Mr. Fairley talked about today's session with reading group 1; specifically, about their eagerness to learn about icebergs, how they float, etc. He said that when he lets everyone talk at once -- when the whole group is participating -- they are walking a fine line; things would easily get out of control. He doesn't usually let that kind of participation go on for long for this reason: he likes the eagerness, but doesn't want them to get carried away. (fieldnote notes, 5/4/83)

The iceberg lesson to which Mr. Fairley referred provides a good illustration of what "fine line" discussions looked like.

> On 5/4/83, reading group 1 met to read and discuss "Danger Afloat," a story about icebergs. The group began with their usual routine of reading 1-2 pages, stopping to answer Mr. Fairley's questions, and then returning to the reading. Mr. Fairley's questions were straightforward: Why do they call them icebergs? What does berg mean? Where does the iceberg get its water from? Why are icebergs so dangerous?
>
> Approximately half-way through the lesson, after Mr. Fairley had just assigned another two pages of reading, David A. asked what Eskimos are. Mr. Fairley responded by asking David questions, to get him to look in the story for some clues. Suddenly the group was talking about igloos--about how they're made, and whether or not people use them anymore. Students were not taking turns, but were simultaneously asking questions and making observations. David eventually won the floor with his persistent question as to how icebergs float, and the discussion then turned to general principles

> of floatation. Mr. Fairley drew pictures on the board, pouring out a continual stream of questions, while the students threw out answers and asked their own questions: How? Why? Turns at talk were not assigned, but followed each other in rapid succession. Several minutes later (about 10 minutes after David's initial question about Eskimos), Mr. Fairley ended the discussion by saying, "We'll continue with icebergs tomorrow. There's a lot of things to learn about icebergs." (fieldnotes, 5/4/83)

It is difficult to capture "fine line" discussions in a vignette--the rapid pace and high intensity of talk precludes written description. My frustration at trying to record a "fine line" in April, for instance, led me, towards the end of the discussion, to simply write my impressions: "This is a great lesson. The brainstorming is wonderful--things are structurally very loose. (Mr. Fairley) is hardly constraining the children at all; yet everything seems to be flowing perfectly. The room is electrified--everyone is involved" (fieldnotes, 4/25/83). I, too, found myself at the edge of my seat.

The two most important aspects of "fine line" discussions were, first, the rapid and "natural" pace at which the group moved from topic to topic (from icebergs to Eskimos, to igloos, to how things float, to Greenland . . .), and second, the rapid succession of turns at talk, which occurred in a more or less smooth manner without Mr. Fairley's direction. This latter point is particularly noteworthy; turns at talk in 2nd - 3rd grade classrooms are usually rigidly assigned and controlled by the teacher.

There are reasons, however, for the high level of teacher control of turns at talk in second and third grade classrooms--one can easily imagine the chaos of a classroom in which no constraints were placed on students' talk. Children of this age are not assumed capable of and are not expected to be able to control their own turns at talk in large classroom discussions for extended periods of time. Because of these constraints--the contextual framing (scholarly discussions), assumptions concerning children's competence at these kinds of discussions, and the sheer number of children involved, there are three additional aspects of "fine line" discussions which are noteworthy: they did not occur frequently, they had a short time duration, and relatively few students actively participated.

Across 35 days of observations, I was able to observe only 7 "fine line" discussions. They were clearly not an everyday event. Moreover, as was stated, they did not last long. The longest sustained "fine line" discussion lasted approximately 10 minutes; most "fine lines" lasted between 3 and 6 minutes. They were often intermittent over a period of 10 to 20 minutes: a discussion would increase in intensity until it got out of hand, Mr. Fairley would enforce turn-taking procedures for several minutes, and then another "fine line" would begin.

Another indication of the difficulties involved in sustaining "fine lines" is that these discussions took place for the most part among the members of the highest reading group. Of the seven "fine lines" recorded, five occurred during reading group 1 sessions, and two were whole class discussions. Although members in the two lower reading groups did have discussions, they never reached the intensity characteristic of "fine lines." "Fine line" discussions, then, clearly required certain kinds of students--students who were on top of the material, who were curious and had many outside interests, and who were capable of sustaining a non-teacher-directed conversation, even if only for a short time. Most of these students were in the highest reading group.

Student Enthusiasm

In the previous three sections (wise choices, student responsibility, and cultivating enthusiasm and thoughtfulness), emphasis has been placed on Mr. Fairley--on his teaching philosophy and on the implementation of that philosophy in the day to day running of his classroom. But the atmosphere of a classroom reflects not only the teacher, and her or his attitudes, goals, and teaching strategies; rather, it reflects the interaction of the teacher and a particular set of students. This includes not only the teacher's attitudes, goals, and teaching strategies, but also the attitudes, goals, and learning strategies of the students. In the following two sections, therefore, I will discuss the students' contributions to the atmosphere in Mr. Fairley's classroom. The focus in this section will be on the high level of enthusiasm among Mr. Fairley's students; in the following section, I will focus more specifically on the different types of students present in the room.

As was made clear in the sections on wise choices, student responsibility, and group discussions, Mr. Fairley's students did not need to be prodded to participate. There was no need for every activity to be devised and monitored by the teacher; rather, students took on tasks and initiated activities. This, of course, was one of Mr. Fairley's primary goals, and he worked to encourage students' active participation by providing them with the materials and time to discover and pursue their own interests. Not all students, however, will necessarily take to this kind of prodding; thus their overall enthusiasm in this context points to the caliber of the students in Mr. Fairley's classroom. They were, in general, a highly motivated and eager group of students.

The students in Mr. Fairley's classroom expressed enthusiasm about teacher-directed classroom tasks as well as about their own interests. With regard to the first category, students were enthusiastic about the whole range of classroom tasks, from the most mundane, to those allowing for the greatest degree of creativity. Students did, of course, moan and groan on occasion, but they often expressed delight when Mr. Fairley initiated even the most routine tasks. On one occasion, for instance, the class responded with a unanimous "YEAH!" when Mr. Fairley announced a practice session on writing capital letters (fieldnotes 5/4/83). On another occasion, the class had been having difficulty coming up with words with short "o" endings. At the end of the lesson, Mr. Fairley said, "If anybody, including myself, comes up with a word that ends with a short 'o', stop the class." The students eagerly picked up the challenge: within five minutes, students were competing to offer their words, and words were still being volunteered an hour later (fieldnotes 3/1/83).

Other kinds of assignments were also greeted with enthusiasm. Students were particularly eager to work on writing assignments, yelling out "YEAH!" when Mr. Fairley presented a writing assignment (fieldnotes 2/9/83), and often seizing any opportunity to extend the time spent writing. On one occasion, Mr. Fairley said that he would give the class one to two minutes to finish an assignment. The students were writing frantically, and when Mr. Fairley offered them an additional 13 minutes, the response was, once again, "YEAH!" (fieldnotes 4/25/83). On yet another occasion, students eagerly accepted Mr. Fairley's offer to take their assignments home for the weekend (fieldnotes 5/20/83). Again, this kind of eagerness was not always unanimous; however, most complaints centered not on having to do the work, but rather on how to do it.

Another frequent occurrence in Mr. Fairley's classroom consisted of students participating in activities and tasks that they were not assigned to. This happened most frequently with reading groups: a reading group would be having a discussion, and "outsiders" (children at seatwork) would either stand behind the group and offer their responses to questions, or they would join the group, and read along with the group as well as answer questions (fieldnotes 4/22/83, 5/2/83, 5/18/83).[45] Some students were even interested in completing the worksheets for other reading groups (fieldnotes 5/4/83). Finally, two students, Fred and Michael D., initiated their movement from the lowest reading group to the middle group. Mr. Fairley kept them in both reading groups for a period of time, and then let them make the move when it was clear that they could handle the work. His response to their desire to move to a higher reading group was overwhelmingly positive: "That's the kind of enthusiasm that I like . . . two little boys who do everything they possibly can." (fieldnotes 5/13/83)[46]

There were also occasions on which students went out of their way (this usually occurred after the class had been dismissed for lunch) to talk with Mr. Fairley about particular topics. On 2/23/83, for instance, Brad and David A. had a lunch-time conversation with Mr. Fairley about Cinquain poetry--about the difficulty of finding just the right words, etc. Another lunch-time conversation focused on Kon Tiki--the theories behind it and the routes it followed (fieldnotes 3/11/83).

Finally, as has been made clear in some of the previous sections, students responded eagerly (and in appropriate "scholarly" fashion) to opportunities for creative and self-motivated activity and thinking. "Wise choices" time was usually a very productive time, and Mr. Fairley often had to work to keep discussions (especially student-initiated "fine lines") from getting out of hand. The students in this classroom, then, were particularly well suited to Mr. Fairley's teaching strategies, and for the most part reacted positively, pushing not only themselves, but Mr. Fairley as well.

Identity Types

Not all the students in Mr. Fairley's classroom were the same, however, and enthusiasm, eagerness and zeal were not uniform characteristics of all the students. There were, rather, different types of students, each contributing different pieces of the classroom's atmosphere. In this section, therefore, I will focus on the types of students present in Mr. Fairley's classroom.

During a discussion on saliency, Mr. Fairley elaborated three broad categories of students. I noted the following in my notes:

> (Mr. Fairley) elaborated on his criteria for salience. Of least importance are the children with academic needs--those who simply need to be pushed a little . . . Next in importance are the children with extraordinary intellectual skills--the creative and enthusiastic children who voluntarily engage in "extras." Finally, and most important, are the children who need extra help and attention from the teacher. (memo 1/27/84)

To these broad categories, I would add a fourth: the "average" students, those whose academic performance was quite adequate, and who didn't have any outstanding needs in either direction. I will discuss each of these groups in turn.[47]

1) The Model Students/Scholars. In the section on "fine lines," I pointed out that there was a certain group of students who were at the core of these types of discussions. Although most students in the vicinity of a "fine line" participated in some way or another, it was those students who participated not only as listeners but also as talkers who best represent the model, or scholarly, category of student.

Mr. Fairley's definition of a model student for this particular school year was best realized by Eric. After a before school conversation with Mr. Fairley about Eric, I noted the following in my notes:

> (Mr. Fairley) started talking about Eric . . . (he) had spent some time talking with him during free time yesterday afternoon--Eric is very apologetic about not getting all his work done on time; he is meticulous and a perfectionist. (Mr. Fairley) laughed and said that that is exactly what he cares about--that is how he'd like all the children to be. Eric doesn't get all his work done, but what he does he does well--he always does a good job. What's important, says (Mr. Fairley), is quality . . . He feels that Eric is on the right

> track--most other children are just worried about getting the work done and over with. (fieldnote notes 3/25/83)

On yet another occasion, I noted the following:

> Eric really concentrates on his work and takes time to think about what he's doing. Although he often doesn't get the work finished, what he does get finished is high quality. (Mr. Fairley) would like Eric's attitude to be a model for the other children. (fieldnote notes 5/9/83)

Eric was clearly a serious student who was concerned about learning: he was what Mr. Fairley called a scholar. But a scholar was not simply a serious student who worked hard to complete all classroom tasks. In addition to this characteristic, a scholar was also someone who was curious, who thought about things in new and different ways, who sought out new information wherever it could be found, and who was enthusiastic about learning.

Eric exhibited all these characteristics. He was, first of all, continually asking questions. On one occasion, for instance, the class was discussing a fable in which a lion is convinced by his future father-in-law to have his claws and teeth removed. The children were trying to decide between several alternative morals to the story, when Eric stopped Mr. Fairley to ask if a cat without claws and teeth is really a cat (fieldnotes 3/29/83). On another occasion, Eric, along with two other students who also fit into the category of model student, spent half the lunch period asking Mr. Fairley questions about longitude and latitude, compasses, sextants, the prime meridian, etc. (interview 3/7/83). One of Eric's characteristics, then, was curiosity, and he never hesitated to pursue his interests, be it through asking direct questions, or asking questions on where to look for answers (on one occasion, for instance, he asked Mr. Fairley a series of questions about the Thesaurus; Mr. Fairley noted this as an example of "extras" [fieldnote notes 2/17/83]).

The example given above of Eric's question concerning cats without claws also illustrates his ability to think about things in different ways. There were other occasions when he set himself off from the rest of the class. On 3/7/83, students were told to draw a picture to go along with a poem Mr. Fairley had put on the board. Before beginning the assignment, Mr. Fairley had the children brainstorm about the kinds of things they might include in their pictures. As Mr. Fairley listed the suggestions on the board, Eric interrupted to protest: "I'm talking about the inside of the boat--they're all talking about the outside" (fieldnotes 3/7/83).

Finally, Eric knew about things one would not normally expect someone of his age to know. For instance, when Mr. Fairley suggested world hunger as a possible topic to be included in a writing assignment, Eric made a point about Roosevelt's picture on dimes, and then went on to explain the phrase "brother can you spare a dime" (fieldnotes 3/29/83). As Mr. Fairley once stated, "Eric's a neat little boy and knows a thousand things" (interview 2/24/83).

The scholar, then, was someone who was intelligent, did quality work, and was above all enthusiastic and excited about learning. Ideally, the scholar was also well-behaved. The scholar's enthusiasm, however, often caused her or him to get carried away. Even Eric, the ideal scholar in this classroom, was known for being "hyper" (fieldnote notes 3/29/83), and there was only one other student in this category (Teresa) who was as well-behaved as Eric. The remaining four scholars (Doug, Mandy, David A., and Brad) were all known as "talkers"--they were loud and excitable.

The point to be made here is that the creative intelligence of the model student in this classroom sometimes manifested itself in unruly behavior, in the breaking of rules, and in a failure to always complete classroom tasks. David A., for instance, was continually talking out of turn, and he often only turned in a few sentences for a writing assignment; but the sentences and the ideas behind them were of high quality (fieldnotes, 3/29/83). This is what mattered most to Mr. Fairley; David A. *thought* (fieldnote notes 2/23/83). It was as if a student who did not go off the beaten path could not be a scholar--they had to be constantly pushing against boundaries, and if some of those boundaries included the conventions of classroom behavior, it was both understandable and reasonable.[48]

This notion of the model student as intelligent, creative, and somewhat unruly fits in well with the atmosphere in Mr. Fairley's classroom, as presented in previous sections. In a classroom in which students are given responsibility and the opportunity to pursue their own interests, and in which emphasis is placed on lively discussion, rules, regulations, and highly conformist behavior are inevitably considered secondary rather than primary. This was clearly the case with the model students, who not only contributed a great deal to the "intense" atmosphere of the classroom, but who also had a positive impact on the other, perhaps less self-motivated students in the room.

2) The Academic Problems. The academic problem students, as defined above, were those students who "simply need to be pushed a little" (memo 1/27/84). The academic problem category, however, was made up of a diverse group of students who had a wide range of academic difficulties.

The five students in this group may be split into two groups: those who did simply need to be pushed into putting out more effort and those who were only capable of going so far--who had shortcomings in their abilities.

The first group contained two students, Shannon and Michael R. Shannon was a very intelligent student, one whom Mr. Fairley felt was not working up to her abilities. In this sense, she was not an academic problem because her work was below grade level; rather, she was an academic problem because her work was below her level. Shortly after beginning the research project I wrote the following in my notes:

> (Mr. Fairley) said that he really likes her (Shannon) a lot, but that sometimes she infuriates him. He said that he doesn't give her work that is too hard because she doesn't do well, but that when he gives her easier work she's finished in two minutes and then she becomes a problem. He thinks that Shannon probably knows a lot more than she lets on, and that she could do much harder work. He said that one time Doug put "I don't understand" on one of his papers--(Mr. Fairley) understood this, because it was an unusually hard assignment. But Shannon caught on to it and started writing that on papers that (Mr. Fairley) knew she could do. (fieldnote notes 2/28/83)

Later in the year, when Mr. Fairley was discussing his goals for the remainder of the year, he stated that his goal for Shannon was to get her to push herself a little harder:

> . . . she's been left behind by a number of kids in the class who . . . read about as well as she did in the beginning of the year and have moved on by . . . maybe they would have moved by anyway, maybe that's just the type of person(s) that they are (and) that she is, but I'm feeling, "Gee, I don't think Shannon has gotten or has pushed herself as hard as I would have liked to see her," so I end up turning the heat on her a little bit to get a little bit more from her. (interview 3/7/83)

Mr. Fairley had this problem with Shannon throughout the school year, and although she seemed quite capable of it, she never moved from the middle reading group to the highest reading group--despite the fact that she was one of the top readers in the class at the beginning of the year. Mr. Fairley said that he realized that school work was not Shannon's first priority, but he always felt frustrated when he knew that someone wasn't working to their full potential (fieldnote notes 5/4/83).

Michael R. presented a somewhat different case. He was clearly not as "manipulative" as Shannon, and Mr. Fairley was often not sure if Michael was incapable or simply not interested (fieldnote notes 3/11/83). He did feel, however, that Michael was "immature," and that patience, coupled with a little prodding, would be helpful (fieldnote notes 5/6/83). The following vignette of a seatwork session in early March illustrates the ways in which Mr. Fairley worked to increase Michael's motivation and persistence:

> After the preliminary activities of the morning had been taken care of (attendance, etc.), Mr. Fairley assigned a worksheet which the children were to complete before moving on to individual reading folder work. The worksheets were distributed according to membership in reading groups; the worksheet given to the group of which Michael was a member consisted of three parts, dealing with phonics skills, matching events to stories recently read, and fill-in-the-

blank sentences. The teacher told the children to do the worksheet "like a test."

Shortly after seatwork began, Mr. Fairley sat at a table in the back of the room. Children who had questions or needed to have their worksheets or reading folder units corrected started to go to the table. Mr. Fairley also got up periodically to get new materials for children working on reading folders.

Approximately 15 minutes into the seatwork session, Mr. Fairley got up to go to the reading folder progress chart (on the wall). Michael, who was seated in the back row (close to the table), was talking with the boy sitting next to him. Mr. Fairley went to their desks, told Michael's neighbor to get back to work, and asked Michael, "how are you coming on that stuff? . . . Put that envelope away" (he had been drawing on an envelope). Mr. Fairley then went to the progress chart, after which he returned to the back table.

Almost immediately, Michael went to the table with his worksheet. Several children were waiting in line to see Mr. Fairley, but he skipped over them and asked, "All done Michael?" He wasn't. Mr. Fairley helped him to answer one of the questions and then sent him back to his seat. He resumed his work with the other children. After a minute or so, he got up to go to the front of the room, stopping at Michael's desk on the way to ask once again if he had finished. Upon receiving a negative reply, Mr. Fairley helped Michael with another question and then said, "That's it, keep on going, you'll be done in no time."

By this time, most of the children had completed a unit in their reading folders as well as their worksheets, and some of them were wandering around the room and talking. Mr. Fairley went to the front of the room and made arrangements with the class for turn-taking on the computer. As soon as this was settled, he returned to Michael's desk. Michael was now almost half-way done with the worksheet. Mr. Fairley said, "We have to stay with it all the way through--keep going," and then he cleared off all the "extra" papers from Michael's desk, telling him that he should have no distractions. Mr. Fairley returned to the back table and corrected the remaining reading folder work. The amount of talking in the class increased as the children were getting ready for break time.

Once again, Michael brought his worksheet to Mr. Fairley. He had now completed two of the three sections. Mr. Fairley went over the directions for the third section, said, "OK, Michael, now the last part," and sent him back to his seat. He then went to the front of the room and told everyone to stop for break.

> Two hours later, when the children were getting ready for lunch, Mr. Fairley said that those children whom he had down for talking and those who had not completed their assignments had to stay after the others were dismissed. Six children were on the teacher's list for talking; Michael was the only child who hadn't completed his assignments. Michael sat still while the teacher reprimanded the "talkers" (3-4 minutes). After the teacher dismissed the talkers, he sat down near Michael and said, "Michael, when I looked up from the reading groups this morning you were just looking like that" (he had put on a "spaced out" expression). He then told him that he needs to put some effort into his work, and sent him to lunch.

From Mr. Fairley's perspective, Michael, for whatever reaons, lacked motivation. As illustrated by the vignette, Mr. Fairley reacted to this assessment of Michael by keeping tabs on him during work sessions, and by "checking in" with Michael as often as he thought was necessary to keep him going. In the end, Mr. Fairley retained Michael so that he could work with him during the following year as well.

The problems of the remaining three academic problem students, Tracy, Crystal, and Terrell, centered not so much on motivation as on ability.[49] All three students had, according to Mr. Fairley, information processing difficulties (fieldnote notes 2/4/83). Terrell, for instance, had problems "catching on" (fieldnote notes 2/28/83). Tracy would occasionally have difficulty finding the right page in a reading book (fieldnotes 2/23/83), would get confused by a table of contents (fieldnotes 5/2/83), and on one occasion, used words meant for a different reading group (written on a separate section of the board) to complete a fill-in-the-blank exercise (fieldnotes 2/25/83). Crystal had similar problems with these kinds of exercises and would often focus on the fill-in-the-blank words rather than on the sentences the words were to be used to complete (fieldnote notes, 2/28/83). Crystal would also occasionally read an entire story without understanding a key word (e.g. she would read a story on tarpits without knowing what a tarpit was) (interview 3/7/83). Both Crystal and Tracy tried very hard; thus their poor academic performance did not reflect a lack of effort. As Mr. Fairley stated in an interview:

> After you left today I sat down with Crystal . . . and explained . . . "Crystal, I'm not upset with the way you're behaving. I'm not upset with how hard you're trying when you work, I'm not upset with your attitude, I am upset with, I explain a certain procedure to do your work with and then you go back and forget the procedure. (interview 3/7/83)

The academic problem group, then, consisted of students who lacked in either effort or ability (or some combination thereof). Mr. Fairley showed less patience with the former than with the latter, but his strategy in all cases was to keep tabs on these students, push them to their potential, and give them as much extra help as he could. Although none of these students participated actively or productively in "fine line" discussions or any of the other "high level" activities in Mr. Fairley's classroom, they all made progress over the course of the school year.

3) The Needy Group. Mr. Fairley defined this "most important" category as consisting of those children "who need extra help and attention from the teacher" (memo 1/27/84). All the students in the academic problem group needed extra help and attention, to be sure; however, only one, Tracy, really fit into the needy group. The other needy student was Monica.

Perhaps the most important characteristic of Tracy and Monica was that they needed, at some level, to be protected--they brought out Mr. Fairley's protective tendencies. Both were "special" children. Tracy, for her part, was a former special education student. Tracy came up in conversation on the second day of my research in Mr. Fairley's room, and I noted the following:

> (Mr. Fairley) told me about Tracy--she used to be in special education, got teased a lot by the other children, etc. She stands out--she's awkward and doesn't always catch on to what the rest of the class is doing. When she first came into the class, some of the children would tease her. (Mr. Fairley) said he threatened two of the children--said that if their difficulties continued, somebody would have to leave the class and that it wouldn't be either him or Tracy. (fieldnote notes 2/4/83)

Tracy stood out not only because of her academic difficulties, but also because she was older and taller than any of the other students in the room. She seemed to be very sensitive about all these aspects of herself. In her first journal entry, for instance, she wrote about her fears of getting answers wrong and of being laughed at (fieldnote notes 2/9/83). Her sensitivity to her height also came out clearly when the students were picking partners for field trips. As Mr. Fairley stated,

> I . . . notice that Tracy starts to stand up, but she also is a little nervous about standing up. I don't think she likes to stand up, she's tall in the class and she doesn't like to stand up in front of everybody else, and she's not sure, I think she still worries . . . that when she stands up that somebody will say, "Oh, I don't (want) Tracy to go with us," because she had such a hard time when she was in another class . . . and in a year and a half we haven't quite been able to convince her that, you know, it'll be all right (viewing session 6/ /83).

On another occasion, after a school-wide assembly in which children were encouraged to participate, Mr. Fairley said that he was glad that Tracy had not participated:

> . . . she can be kind of awkward in her movements at times . . . In a controlled situation here in class, she can act silly and get away with it, but . . . I think that kids that are tall and large for their age and for their grade . . . are the kind of kids that people look at right away, and I was very glad that she didn't get up there. (interview, 2/24/83)

Tracy, in sum, was shy, awkward, and sensitive. Mr. Fairley, then, provided her not only with extra academic help, but also with protection. This included punishing students who teased her (e.g., by taking away recess privileges [interview 6/9/83]), and also protecting her from other school personnel who wanted to put her back into a special education program (fieldnote notes 5/20/83, 6/14/83).[50]

Monica was not a special education student, but like Tracy, she had special needs. Monica was Mexican-born and was new to the U.S. and to English. Her parents spoke hardly any English at all. This was her second year with Mr. Fairley.

Monica was, above all, extremely shy. Unlike the other children in the room, she interacted with me only once or twice during my entire stay in the classroom (almost five months), and spent most of her time with the other Spanish-speaking student in the room, Paula. She was extremely well-behaved, and would never give up on a task until she had done it properly (fieldnote notes, 5/2/83).

Although Monica, unlike Tracy, was never laughed at by the other students in the room, Mr. Fairley was very affectionate and protective towards her. He often patted her on the head and gave her hugs, and he always chose Monica to ride with him on field trips: "I like to take Monica because I still worry about her getting mixed (up) and getting lost or something, and I probably shouldn't because she's pretty grown-up and she knows what she's doing" (interview, 6/9 /83).

Both Tracy and Monica, then, were extremely shy and sensitive students, who seemed to call out for attention, affection, and protection. From Mr. Fairley's perspective, they were two of the most important students in his room.

4) The Normal/Average Students. The above three groups of students were those who stood out the most for Mr. Fairley, either because of their superior intelligence and creativity, their difficulties with academic tasks, or their general neediness. Almost half of the students in Mr. Fairley's class (11 of 23) did not fit into any of these categories and were what I would call normal, or average, students. In the day-to-day press of classroom life, in which Mr. Fairley had to attend to the demands of 23 children, those with the greatest needs (i.e., those who needed challenging tasks, extra help, or sensitive attention) were the most salient.

Of the groups discussed so far, however, the students in the average category had the greatest affinity with the model students, or scholars. As noted in the section on student enthusiasm, the overall atmosphere of the room was lively and eager. Although the average students were rarely the major participants in "fine lines," they participated eagerly in non-fine line reading discussions, in discussions on writing assignments, and in the writing assignments themselves.

The average student group, then, was a somewhat toned down version of the scholar group. Although not as intelligent or creative as the scholars, Mr. Fairley considered all the average students to be intelligent. They worked hard, for the most part, and often went beyond required tasks to pursue their own interests. Fred and Chris, for instance, requested that Mr. Fairley move them from the lower to the middle reading group (fieldnote notes 4/22/83), and for a period of time they did the work for both reading groups. They, not Mr. Fairley, initiated this move. Another average student, David P., had a tendency to write a great deal for writing assignments, had a very good memory for detail (fieldnote notes 2/17/83), and was often interested in learning new things (fieldnote notes 2/15/83). Finally, Marty was known for his distinctive writing style (fieldnote notes 5/16/83).

The average students were average, then, only in relation to the high intelligence and creativity levels of the scholars. They did not go quite as far as the scholars did, did not produce as high quality work, and did not come up with as many novel ideas. They also were not as unruly as the model students; in contrast to such students as David A., and Doug, the average students were extremely well-behaved and well-mannered--they were quieter, more courteous, and more respectful, both of Mr. Fairley and their peers.

Again, the average students were "average" only when compared with the model students. In another classroom, in another year, they may very well have been considered above average. Along with the model students, then, the average students contributed a great deal to the "intensity" of Mr. Fairley's classroom, and participated fully and enthusiastically in the learning process.

NOTES

[1] Phi a Laotian student, presented a unique case. See footnote 22, page 46, below.

[2] This one-sidedness held for only one other group of students, the chronic behavior problems (the majority of whose characteristics were seen as negative and detrimental); all other groups were characterized by a mixture of positive and negative attributes.

[3] I am using the pronoun "he" here because there were no girls in the category of "model student." This absence reflects (in part) Mr. Fairley's differing perceptions of girls'and boys' academic abilities. See pp. 49-51 for further discussion of those differences.

[4] Indeed, from an observer's perspective, it seemed that, rather than talking to Scott in between his other activities, the tasks of taking attendance, etc., were attended to at convenient points (pauses) in the conversation--i.e., the discussion with Scott was, for those few moments, the focus of Mr. Fairley's attention.

[5] Since Pat M. was a member of both the above average and the chronic behavior problems groups, and will therefore be discussed in more detail later, the focus in this section will be on Becky.

[6] These two instances serve to illustrate the nature of the assumptions shared by Mr. Fairley and myself. In Becky's case, we both seemed to have similar ways of seeing and reacting to "laziness."

[7] Note the reference to boys' "extra" interests--"just about every other boy in the class." This perceived difference between boys and girls with regard to "extra" interests is discussed on p. 50.

[8] This quote provides a good example of the ways in which Mr. Fairley constructed identity types. Note how Jarrod and Shane (the other two chronic problem students) are separated from the rest of the boys (see above footnote), and how Pat is grouped with them on the basis of a lack of "extra" interests.

[9] What this looked like with regard to Jarrod and Shane will be discussed in more detail below, in the section on academic problem students.

[10] See pp. 66-67 below for discussion of the ways in which Mr. Fairley invoked this contrast set.

[11] As in the section on model students, the pronoun "he" is used here because here were no female chronic problem students. See the section on episodic problem students, below, for discussion of different perceptions of problem behavior based on gender.

[12] Shane and Jarrod were friends. Mr. Fairley saw this as a problem, insofar as they seemed to influence each other in negative ways. He therefore made periodic attempts to keep them apart, and to get them more involved with other students who might influence them in positive ways.

In addition to trying to minimize the influence they had on each other, Mr. Fairley also tried to minimize Jarrod's and Shane's influence on new students. For instance, when a new student joined the class in March, I wrote the following in my notes:

(Mr. Fairley) showed me David W's report card from his last school. He pointed to the word "aggressive" and said that he hoped David W. wouldn't turn out to be another Shane or Jarrod. He also mentioned that he was pleased that Pat M. wasn't here today. (Note the connections between Shane, Jarrod and Pat M.). (Mr. Fairley) wants to try to get David W. in with the good crowd, like Scott and Josh. (fieldnote notes 3/26/84)

[13] I would speculate here that such "timing" was also practiced by the model students, who, as a consequence, probably managed to always do the right thing at the right time (for example, raising hands or calling out answers at the exact moment when Mr. Fairley expected students to do so, and not several moments too early or late). If this were the case I would expect it to be less noticeable than the opposite tendency (always doing the wrong thing at the wrong time), i.e., the students would be perceived as acting "normally."

[14] At times this obliviousness seemed as frustrating for Mr. Fairley as hostility or defiance. I recorded the following in another context: "Mr. Fairley told me that Shane feels no guilt - he just thinks he can do . . . things and get away with it, and he isn't really concerned about getting in trouble." (fieldnote notes, 5/25/84)

[15] See pp. 13-14, above for definitions of class.

[16] More examples of the home-life explanatory framework are given below.

[17] Again, the belief in and practice of the value was more important to Mr. Fairley than the actual economic situation. For instance:

There are families that are just lower economic and still have a mother and father and still hold on to . . . you know, to values of taking care of things, taking care of their family, haveing pride. You don't want the teacher to see that you're poor. You want to, you know, you wear your best clothes to school. Um, families that, if you didn't know, through some records or free lunch, you wouldn't know that they were not middle class. Like Jason. You wouldn't know that he's not a middle class family if you didn't know other things about him. (interview, 5/4/84)

Jason, then, although most likely in the same economic bracket as Shane and Jarrod, did not act lower class: he was "taught to take care of things." (interview, 5/4/84)

[18] These latter comments indicate that Mr. Fairley recognized the importance of economics; i.e., if both parents had to work, it was unlikely that there would always be an adult at home to take care of and supervise the child. Again, however, the notions of value and commitment seemed to override economics. For instance:

What do you say to your child to make them come in and sit in their seats? . . . I know the answer for it--it's just that, is somebody going to make a commitment? It's a life-long commitment to your children--over and over and over . . . I mean go over and over-to reteach and reteach and reteach--something flashing out every time you do something wrong. (interview 5/4/84)

[19] Although this statement seems to indicate that Mr. Fairley saw all his students within the context of their home lives, references to the family situations of children other than Shane and Jarrod were rare, and were most often made for purposes of contrast with the situations of Shane and Jarrod.

20

Recall that one of the characteristics of the above average student was that s/he was judged to be smarter than s/he demonstrated through his/her work. Pat M., then, was able to have good academic standing (as measured by test scores), and yet still be seen as performing way below capacity.

21

There was some evidence, however, that Mr. Fairley thought Shane wasn't only unmotivated. On 3/26/84, when Mr. Fairley announced to the class that anyone not seated would have to stay after school, Shane turned and told me that I would have to stay after school, since I was standing. I later made the following notation in my notes: "Mr. Fairley expressed a little surprise at Shane's being able to turn (his) words around to accuse me--he didn't think Shane was that smart" (fieldnote notes, 3/26/84)

22

There was one other child, Phi, who also had academic difficulties. These difficulties, however, were the result of a language problem (Phi was just learning English), and started to disappear rapidly as his English improved. I would speculate that, had he known English at the beginning of the year, he would have been categorized as a model student. Indeed, at the end of the year, Mr. Fairley stated, "I suspect that it won't be long before you see Phi near the top of his class." (interview, 6/13/84)

23

The phrase "more or less" is used here beacuse two of these students, Margie and Tonya, were also part of the episodic problem group, which shared some negative behavior patterns and personality traits. (see below, pp. 52-55.) Unlike with Shane and Jarrod, however, these negative patterns and traits were not perceived as being the cause of those girls' academic problems.

24

On one level, it may be stated that the norm for girls was the absence of "extras," while the norm for boys was their presence. That at least the latter was the case is illustrated by the following quote, in which Mr. Fairley coplains about the lack of "extra" interests on the part of Pat M., Shane and Jarrod, the three chronic behavior problem students:

> You know, he (Pat M.) doesn't seem all that interested in astronomy or . . . anything in particular. I don't see him having . . . interest in those . . . shark books. I see David and Phi and Pat and Jeremy and Michael and Josh--just about every other boy in the class interested in them, except for Shane and Jarrod. But Pat, who has all the intellectual abilities, doesn't seem all that interested in them. (interview, 12/15/83)

25
This did not seem to be an absolute, however. See be low, p. 105 for a comparison with Mr. Fairley's class from last year, in which he considered a girl to be one of the brightest students in the class.

26
Here, as with Jarrod and Shane, Mr. Fairley may have been making causal connections between behavior and academic performance.

27
I am using the pronoun "she" here because all the episodic problem students were girls.

28
This quote provides a good example of how Mr. Fairley constructed identity types. Note how he names the students in list-like fashion, based on similarities in their behaviors.

29
The statements, "they have all learned a great deal this year," and "they all have done good work" seems to contradict Margie's and Tonya's statuses as academic problem students. I would claim, however, that this "contradiction" points to the complexities of Mr. Fairley's sense-making more than to discrepancies in his thinking. In other words, perceived attributes were neither fixed nor absolute, but varied in salience with context. In this context, then, in which emphasis is not on academic performance per se, general and relative statements about academic performance are being used to make a point about the episodic nature of these students' misbehaviors.

30
Although the chronic behavior problems did on occasion attempt to make amends for their misbehavior, this was not a pattern with them. Shane for instance, seemingly did not even know when to stop misbehaving, let alone make amends: "Now if he makes a mistake, so big deal, he goes right on making another mistake." (interview, 5/4/84)

31
This is not meant to indicate that these students were unimportant in Mr. Fairley's eyes. Although they may have been less salient on a practical level than some other students (they rarely presented problems that necessitated Mr. Fairley's immediate attention), they were nevertheless emotionally salient.

From a researcher's perspective, however, the average students were less salient than other students, and at times seemed almost "invisible." For this reason--and despite Mr. Fairley's recognition of this student type, and "approval", so to speak, of this section of the paper--the "average student" type seems somewhat tenuous to me.

32
A defiant attitude seems more in keeping with the chronic behavior problem than with the episodic behavior problem. Again, however, the notion of consistency is important here. Note, also, the language used: Nedra is described as being "bratty" and "spoiled," not "hostile" or "confrontive". This fits Mr. Fairley's perception that girls are less defiant, and perhaps more accommodating to authority, than boys.

33
This taken-for-grantedness reflects something of the relationship between Mr. Fairley and myself. Having worked together for an extended period of time, we came to develop sets of shared assumptions: we both knew that Josh was a good reader, and neither of us was surprised about it, so there was no need to comment on it--it remained implicit. Perhaps this kind of giveness with respect to Josh's reading may not have been present had Mr. Fairley and I only met this year.

34
Since the study did not begin until February, I was not able to observe the introduction and establishment of "wise choices." I was able, however, to observe Mr. Fairley at the beginning of the following school year. Based on those observations, I would speculate that Mr. Fairley introduced and explained "wise choices" explicitly, with particular emphasis on being wise in one's choices, and that he then monitored his students' activities during this event until he felt satisfied that their choices were indeed wise.

35
On occasion, the burden became excessive, and Mr. Fairley felt constrained to put limits on student activities. On 6/10/83, for instance there was a great deal of noise in the room, and Mr. Fairley was having difficulties running the reading groups. After telling the class that "It doesn't matter to me if you're doing reading, writing, or math, as long as you work quietly," Mr. Fairley had each child say what she or he was planning to work on. He then went on to say that if they all worked on different things, he couldn't tell how much work they did--it would be easier to measure their progress if they were all working on the same assignment. He concluded by saying that working on different things is okay if they work quietly--it's only a problem if they're noisy (fieldnotes, 6/10/83). There was a balance, then, between trying to accommodate individual students, and running a classroom.

36
Again, since I was not present during the first half of the school year, there is no way to document the process of this "weaning." There was a trend during the second half of the year, however, of giving fewer and fewer explanations of worksheet directions. On this basis, I would speculate that Mr. Fairley began the school year by providing explicit and detailed interpretations of directions, and only gradually handed this responsi-

bility over to the students as one means of getting the children to think for themselves.

[37] There was, of course, a balance here. Mr. Fairley paid very close attention to which students had weaknesses in which areas, and often approached them. He was also attuned to those students who were too shy to ask for help. The point, it seems, is that Mr. Fairley wanted helping interactions to work both ways: there is a difference between a teacher determining that a child needs help in a certain area and the child taking a more active stance by seeking out help or information.

The balance, however, was a delicate one. The goal was to get students to take some responsibility without, on the one hand, leaving them in the lurch, and on the other, encouraging students to constantly seek Mr. Fairley out for help on every detail of a task.

[38] Although, as discussed in the section on "wise choices," Mr. Fairley often permitted students to modify these assignments.

[39] As he stated in an interview, "I have found that the best way to help a child is just to keep pouring questions on them, just ask them questions and questions . . ." (interview, 2/24/83)

[40] There were three reading groups. On one of each of the eight days, I was unable to record the reading questions for one of the groups.

[41] This series is a particularly good example of how Mr. Fairley worked to make a seeming "nonsense story" relevant.

[42] Questions of this nature were not distributed evenly among all the reading groups. Of the 21 sets of questions collected, the distribution of "extra" questions and no "extra" questions was as follows:

"Extra" questions		No "extra" questions	
Group 1	6	Group 1	1
Group 2	3	Group 2	4
Group 3	2	Group 3	5

The higher level groups were clearly expected (and given the opportunity) to move beyond the story more frequently than were the lower level groups.

43
This is a good example of the way in which Mr. Fairley worked to accommodate students' questions, and to encourage them to look for information anywhere it can be found (even a Charlie Brown TV show is legitimate).

44
These students will be discussed further in the section on student types.

45
Mr. Fairley did on occasion send an outsider back to their seat, but this was usually because he felt that the outsider in question had not completed her or his seatwork. (fieldnotes 5/18/83)

46
Mr. Fairley raised his voice to make this statement, so that everyone in the room could hear. It was one of the ways in which he encouraged students to work to their full potential.

47
It is important to note here that the ranking of these categories reflects who stood out the most for Mr. Fairley, and not necessarily who he attended to the most. The "least important" category, for instance, (those with academic needs), received a great deal of in-class attention from Mr. Fairley.

48
This is not to say that Mr. Fairley did not get annoyed with these students--they were frequently reprimanded. Behind his reprimands, however, there was a sense of tolerance, based on the high intelligence of these students.

49
Terrell was somewhere between the two categories of motivation problem vs. ability problem--Mr. Fairley did on occasion state that Terrell could understand more if he tried a little harder. (fieldnote notes 5/13/83)

50
According to Mr. Fairley, the special education teacher was not very sensitive, and what Tracy needed, above all, was a sensitive teacher. (fieldnote notes, 5/20/83)

Mr. Fairley did such a good job of instilling confidence in Tracy that her mother, with whom I am acquainted, still praises him (Tracy left Mr. Fairley's classroom three years ago).

Chapter 6

CASE STUDIES OF FOUR BEGINNING TEACHERS: LEARNING PRACTICAL WAYS OF SEEING

This chapter focuses on the practical things on which four novice teachers concentrated during their first year of practice. The first section describes some significant teacher observations recorded between September and December. The second section discusses the teachers' views of their work from January to March. Finally, the third section presents teachers' end-of-the-school-year observations as they were recorded between April and June.

Daisy Thomas

CASE STUDIES OF FOUR BEGINNING TEACHERS:
LEARNING PRACTICAL WAYS OF SEEING

Introduction

Absent from most of the literature about teachers' practice is research on how novice teachers make sense of daily actions that occur in their classrooms. Perrone (1976) and Brophy and Good (1984) suggested that teachers have not had opportunities to examine their practices, nor have they been encouraged to do so. The Teachers' Practical Ways of Seeing Project provided a forum in which four beginning teachers reflected on their practice by keeping journals, taking notes, and participating in audiotaped interviews with project personnel. In addition to supplying needed research, these opportunities for reflection and structured discussion proved to be of great value to the teachers themselves in understanding their own practice and motivation.

This three-part report will focus on some of the practical things these four novice teachers concentrated upon during their first year of practice. Section 1, called "The Settling In Period," describes some significant teacher observations which were recorded between September and December. The second section, "The Critical Teaching Months," discusses the teachers' views of their work from January to March. Finally, Section 3, "The Home Stretch," presents teachers' end-of-the-school-year observations as they were recorded between April and June.

The participants are four first-year teachers, all of whom had been trained in alternative educational preservice programs at

Michigan State University. These new teachers will be referred to in this report as B-1, B-2, B-3, and B-4.

B-1 is a second-grade, first-year teacher in a well-established Protestant school system in a mid-Michigan setting.

B-2 teaches pre-kindergarten four-year-olds. She works in a Protestant school outside the city of Detroit that was designed to be an elementary preparatory school for urban students. She was hired two weeks after school started.

B-3 works with fourth graders in a Roman Catholic school in a mid-Michigan suburban community. She joined the school staff three weeks after school had opened.

B-4 started work with her first graders the first day of school in a middle-class suburban, mid-Michigan city.

The real names of all participants in this report have been withheld; pseudonyms have been used to protect persons and locations in the project.

The data base in this report comes from 24 hours of audiotaped interview conversations between four beginning teachers and the personnel in this project. Section 1 is based on fifteen hours of interview discussion, while Section 2 is based on 4 hours and Section 3 on 5 hours of discussion.

In an article on teacher-researcher deliberations, Florio-Ruane and Dohanich (1984) stated that "teachers have a great deal to teach those who study them." This report describes what beginning teachers focus upon during their first weeks, first months, first year of teaching. Although an attempt has been made to transcribe their comments as accurately as possible, all of their observations and stories can never be fully reproduced, even with the best intentions. So it is in this limited, yet honest, effort that we share these findings.

Section 1: The Settling In Period

The first section of our report, "The Settling In Period," extends from September to December (See Table 1). During this period, the students learn to socialize appropriately with new classmates. They come to understand the expectations of school and learn to work in a harmonious manner with others. An addendum is attached to "The Settling In Period" because the classroom and school activities change with the advent of the fall and early winter holiday celebrations, beginning with Halloween and ending with Christmas recess. This is a time of interruptions and irregularities in the daily schedule. Every experienced teacher knows that in order to function at any level successfully, you must be flexible.

The First Days/Weeks

Although all four participants in the Teachers' Practical Ways of Seeing Project were first-year teachers, they did not begin working at the same time. The second-grade teacher (B-1) and the first-grade teacher (B-4) started work on the first day of school; the pre-kindergarten (B-2) teacher and the fourth-grade teacher (B-3) were hired three weeks after the school year began. The two who started on the first day seemed more self-assured.

Table 1: The Settling In Period

Participant	Position	Interview 1	Interview 2	Interview 3	Interview 4
Beginning Teacher 1 (B-1)	**2nd grade, established inner city Protestant school. Started at beginning of school year.**	10-06-83	10-18-83	10-24-83	11-14-84
Beginning Teacher 2 (B-2)	**Pre-kdgn., two-year-old Protestant school. Hired 2 weeks after school started.**	10-19-83	11-01-83	11-16-83	12-14-83
Beginning Teacher 3 (B-3)	**4th grade, suburban Catholic school. Hired 3 weeks after school started.**	11-08-83	11-21-83	12-08-83	
Beginning Teacher 4 (B-4)	**1st grade, suburban middle-class public school. Began first day of school.**	9-26-84	10-02-84	10-29-84	11-12-84

B-1 (second grade):

> I knew what I wanted to do. I had the first day very organized and knew exactly what I was going to do. I had additional activities planned just in case. They were angels the first day.

The teachers hired later (B-2 and B-3) experienced a more difficult time settling into school and managing their classes.

B-2 (pre-kdgn.):

> At the onset it was rough. I was hired the second week of school, a week later than everybody else. Trends had been set. It was hard.

All four novice teachers mentioned feeling uncomfortable those first days and weeks, but those hired later had more difficulty in getting the year off to a good start. Comments from participating teachers indicated that the time of hiring was one factor that influenced their initial observations.

Getting Acquainted and First Impressions of My Class

Wubbels (1985) asserts that "one of the principal problems facing a new teacher is how to create a favorable (working) climate in the classroom. The difficulties teachers have maintaining discipline is a part of this problem."

As soon as they felt less anxious in the new environment, the novice teachers shifted their attention from personal concerns to observations of the pupils. The pre-kindergarten teacher and the fourth-grade teacher, both of whom were hired later in the year, identified problem areas earlier than their colleagues who started on the first day of school.

B-3 (fourth grade):

> They're a really good group, but their chemistry is chat-chat-chat . . . . Getting past the talk is quite a challenge.

B-2 (pre-kdgn.):

> At the beginning it looked hopeless. I said, 'Gosh, these kids don't know anything.' Some of them don't even know their last names.

In the getting acquainted process, each teacher used techniques with which she felt comfortable. Before the first-grade teacher introduced herself, told her class about her cat and listened to them talk about what they would learn in first grade. The other three started out with structured class guidelines as a means of establishing order and routine.

B-1 (second grade):

> As the days went by they got used to me, they got comfortable. I knew I had to plan a lot of work.

However, in each interview all teachers discussed how important it was for the students to feel comfortable in class. This goal was achieved sooner for some beginning teachers than for others. Some comments are:

B-2 (pre-kdgn.):

> They have knitted together.

B-3 (fourth grade):

> After I got their names and knew where they were at, they became more comfortable.

Gender Differences Observed by Neophytes

Beginning teachers focused on gender differences more than had been anticipated.

An interesting finding surfaced as we continued to interview our novice teachers. They initially identified girls as "bright" or "smart" and boys as "good, hard workers." "He's a real trooper" was the pre-kindergarten teacher's initial observation of a boy whom she identified as "smart" much later in the year.

B-4 (fourth grade):

> I have a girl reading in a high sixth grade book. She is my very highest reader. She's quite capable.
>
> I see one boy just trying.

B-2 (pre-kdgn.):

> I can think of one little girl; she's four year's old. She's very bright and ready to read.

Boys seemed to be identified as discipline problems. Their academic capabilities were discussed secondarily.

B-1 (second grade):

> I have 25 kids; only nine are girls, sixteen are boys, very active, who like to do their thing.

B-2 (pre-kdgn.):

> There are a couple of boys that I have who are very high spirited. I wouldn't say they are problems, just aggressive.

B-3 (fourth grade):

> He's bright, hey, but he calls out the answers before he's asked.

These teachers had almost developed a uniform criteria for describing "brightness" or "smartness" in students. The descriptions are summed up like this: "They give good answers to questions . . . ." "Their responses are usually correct . . . ." "They are good readers, have good vocabularies, and are well-behaved and pay attention to the teacher."

Early in the term, three of our participants used "neat writing" as a criteria to identify smart students, all of whom were girls. One concern this gender sorting raised was "Why has writing been singled out to be evaluated so early in the year?" Could it be that new teachers need help in knowing how to assess or make sense of other content areas early in the year?

Grouping Students for Instruction in Content Areas

In discussions, the new teachers presented a variety of methods for setting up groups in reading and other content areas. The methods included listening to children read orally, using last year's reading check list, and having parent volunteers come in to aid students in completing workbook pages from one basal series so they could progress to the next basal test.

There was unanimous agreement among all four teachers that the academic range in each class was very broad. Efforts were made to put each child in a group where s/he could function at her/his ability level. (In some of the schools where these teachers worked, school policy dictated how basals were to be used in the reading program.)

B-1 (second grade):

> In our school, books must be used that correspond with the grade level the child is in.

Teachers had problems determining how many groups were manageable.

B-3 (fourth grade):

> I'm trying to organize five reading groups. The sub before me had seven groups. That's too many! I consolidated them.

Our pre-kindergarten teacher grouped four-year-olds by performance in phonics, drills, repetition and fine motor development.

Some Non-Academic Problem Areas

The novices had not yet started to single out specific students as disciplinary problems. They emphasized helping students feel comfortable in a new setting.

B-4 (first grade):

> I kept an eye on children who didn't go to kindergarten at this school last year.
>
> I wanted to make sure everyone had a friend.
>
> They were very concerned about lunch. It was a big thing! They even needed help with their drinks and thermos at lunch.

B-2 (pre-kdgn.):

> The four-year-old kindergarteners had difficulties adjusting to a full school day. The length of the day was the hardest. The smaller ones seemed to need more sleep, kissing and hugging, and constant loving.

Several of our novice teachers cited special difficulties students experienced, such as death in a family, divorce and family instability, and being on medication. The athletic superstars were also a concern because they didn't always know how to respect or tolerate others who were not as sports-oriented.

Each beginning teacher felt that making the students feel comfortable and attending to the children's needs was a high priority. Physical movement, non-physical movement, and body language were signals that children were uncomfortable.

B-1 (second grade):

> Socially, her head is glued to her chest.

B-4 (first grade):

> I get a lot of information from their expressions and reactions.
> A key for me is facial expression. The first couple of weeks I don't think I was good at this, but now I try to be more careful how I come across . . . .

Reflections on Change

After three months on the job, the novices were able to point to specific patterns of change in their practice. Several of them had developed "calendar markers" or expectations of where students should be academically and socially by a certain time. This is characteristic of the experienced teacher's practice.

B-3 (fourth grade):

> I think we'll be in good shape by Thanksgiving. I feel like we are almost there.
>
> I have changed my room for closer proximity. I have gotten to know the students better.
>
> There are routine expectations.
>
> I see a lot of cooperation.

B-2 (pre-kdgn.):

> I am preparing for transition and change. They can make an easier transition from subject to subject. I'm doing less 'policing'; they are obeying the rules better.

B-4 (first grade):

> The noise level is lower. It's much quieter . . . smoother. You learn these things from experience, through trial and error. They tell you in preservice that this or that works; well, that's not always true. I have a supportive principal and staff that helped me not be afraid to take risks.

In their reflections on change, these teachers expressed the good feelings they got from being able to talk to other professionals.

The fourth-grade teacher commented, "It takes somebody to draw the questions out of you."

When I Need Help

In their moments of frustration, created by lack of resources or inexperience, the novices would refer back to college instructors in pre-service training. The pre-kindergarten teacher, B-2, said, "Everything you needed was at MSU. There you always had your C.P." The fourth-grade teacher commented, "I was thankful for the Triple E Program."

Although they missed preservice help when there were uncertainties, these inexperienced teachers did not initially seek help from other teachers on the staff. One beginner reported talking to the student's teacher from last year. Two others called the parents of students for solutions.

Teachers had more to say in areas where patterns of success had been repeated. They also talked freely and gave more details of their instruction as their confidence and knowledge of "knowing what to do" increased.

Hey! I'm Catching Up With You!

There were numerous concerns expressed about peer acceptance in the new work environment. Some of the teachers were worried about fitting in. They felt that both parents and teachers would consider them too young. There was a lack of confidence in their ability to do the job as well as the veteran staff. They worried and made comparisons.

B-3 (fourth grade):

> I thought our fourth graders did a better job than the fifth graders.
>
> She's been teaching a long time. I felt so good because my observations were just about like hers on the same children.

In summary, new teachers were anxious about performance and acceptance during their first weeks on the job. This anxiety was more pronounced in the new teachers who started work after school had already begun.

The novice teachers' attention shifted from personal concern to the students as they felt less anxious in the work environment. Beginning teachers paid special attention to gender differences; girls were singled out as "bright" or "smart" much sooner than boys. Neat handwriting seemed to be part of the evaluation criteria for being "bright."

These teachers developed several methods for grouping students in content areas. Oral reading was one method used consistently by the novice as a criterion for placing students in their ability grouping level. School policy was another factor that sometimes affected reading group placement.

Some nonacademic problem areas discussed by our new teachers were difficulties young children had adjusting to a full school day, the effects sweets and special medication had on students' behavior, death or divorce in a family, and the ways in which specific social needs were manifested.

After three months, the novices were able to identify changes in their practice. They had clearer expectations for the class and had set personal "calendar markers" indicating where the class should be at a certain time in the year.

They valued being able to talk with professionals outside the classroom; however, in times of uncertainty they did not seek help from the professional staff where they were employed. Instead they referred back to help they had received in preservice training, and two of them sought answers from the parents of the students they taught.

Conversations between the TPWS teachers were longer and more detailed in areas where they had experienced success.

The majority of information given in the first part of this report presents salient issues discussed by the novice teachers prior to the advent of the fall-winter holidays. An experienced teacher knows that the "face" of the classroom changes during this time, so we reanalyzed the audiotaped interviews to see if new issues surfaced that had not been reported earlier. This, in fact, did happen, and "Extra! Extra!" is an addendum describing how four beginning teachers fared during this hectic time of the year.

Section 1 - Addendum: EXTRA! EXTRA! Read All About It

Routine Sure Helps

Many of these comments reveal how novice teachers establish daily routine. After observing two experienced teachers for almost a year, project coordinator Erickson (1984) commented, "The time of year is one factor that seems to influence what teachers choose to notice." By early November, three of our teachers were reporting recurrent patterns and routines in their observations.

Our second-grade teacher, B-1, employed in a mid-Michigan Protestant school, was still experiencing difficulties observing recurring patterns in classroom life in late October.

B-1 (second grade):

> There's no real day of the week when the class is up or down. When I think about weekends coming, they don't seem to be active then. Mondays change too; sometimes they come in on Monday and they are very calm and sometimes they come in--like today--and they are very active. So I can't see any pattern yet.

She was better able to articulate a pattern by November as her observational skills sharpened.

> The day ran very smoothly, especially for Monday. Overall, I feel more comfortable. I don't have the tension and stuff like I did before. The kids are getting into the routine, even though it's getting closer to Christmas. Everyone says that about that time the kids adjust and you adjust.
>
> I have more time; I'm getting my papers corrected and everything is fitting together.

(Comments: As I listened to the comments of these new teachers and reflected on my own 16 years of practice, I thought of the following questions: Could it be that what appears to be effective management techniques by experienced teachers is nothing more than a set of rehearsed routines? What does the effective novice lack except time? Is there a real difference? If so, what is it?)

The following lengthy quotation was taken from an exchange between the the interviewer and a beginning teacher:

B-4 (first grade):

> I was very nervous and had a lot of doubt and I guess just not knowing . . . . When I started, I had expected

> there to be a more of 'This is what you will do at this time, then you will do that, or this is what's expected of you.' There wasn't a whole lot of that. I was kind of on my own, which really made me nervous. I was kind of unsure of how things were going and needed a lot of feedback. I was always running to people, saying, 'Am I doing this right?' or 'Am I supposed to be doing this?' . . . . I feel like I have just now gotten over that feeling . . . . I don't feel as confused and unsure about myself as I did . . . . I feel like I know now what's really important. I know what things I can put off and I know what things have to be done immediately.

It Takes a Lot of Time to Plan

Brophy and Evertson (1976) wrote: "We believe that well-adjusted college students who have appropriate role definition of what teaching involves, who want to become good teachers, and who apply themselves appropriately can acquire the skills that will make them consistently effective. However, it will be important for such persons to sharpen their observational skills."

The problem our new teachers had was not a lack of good observational skills, but a lack of adequate time to plan and prepare for the many diverse needs and abilities they saw among their students.

B-2 (pre-kdgn.):

> Time, school work, lesson plans . . . . There's so much that needs to be done.

B-1 (second grade):

> What's frustrating is--there's a lot of material out there. I spend a lot of time looking through magazines . . . Some of are no good, others are really good. I spend a lot of planning time going through them for enrichment activities to see what I want to use.

B-4 (first grade):

> So I am constantly trying to find things that will be fun for them and also be a challenge for them. A lot of

> times that meant that I had to sit down and draw it or write it myself. That's a good idea, but it takes forever to write it up.
>
> I spent five hours of school yesterday, just getting ready for today.

(Comments: Experienced teachers are plagued with the same problem: lack of time. One of the places you will see a noticeable difference between a veteran teacher and a novice teacher is in the amount of visible time spent in planning. Veteran teachers have a set of tested routines they know are reliable and can anticipate certain behavior patterns from students. They also have a mentally prepared or written reportoire of back-up activities if the first try fails. It might prove very helpful to have a trained teacher supervisor remain with all new teachers for the first months of school. This would be less costly than a full year and much more could be accomplished in terms of understanding classroom organization and management by new teachers.)

My Room Looks Sharp

Among the new teachers, the pre-kindergarten and the fourth-grade teacher were particularly concerned with how their room looked. They related the physical environment to doing a good job.

B-2 (pre-kdgn.):

> It's shaping up with the bulletin boards and those types of things. You know, I had come a week late and so I was trying to adjust; another teacher's work was up and it was really hard for me. Now the way the room is arranged is really attractive, and today there were two or three of the other teachers who had come downstairs . . . and threatened to steal my ideas. But it looks really, really warm.

The fourth-grade teacher also focused on the physical appearance of the classroom. When asked what particular things she had noticed in the room lately, she replied, "I like the way it looks."

(Comments: Experienced teachers do not seem as concerned about monthly bulletin boards as beginning teachers. Their primary focus tends to be on academic instruction and student progress. Moreover, the novice teachers did not put the same emphasis on the bulletin boards in our June interview.)

Teachers' Profiles/Biographies of Students

By early November, certain students could be singled out and compared to a classmate as a problem or as a good student by specific behaviors.

B-1 (second grade):

> Mary is a little sharper than Betty. She doesn't need to ask as many questions about what to do. She will just pick up a book and read it if she's finished with her work, whereas Betty will ask if you want her to read after her work is finished.
>
> It's usually . . . about five kids that cause problems and the kids know that. Sometimes, during indoor recess or when I'm out of the room, someone will come up and say, 'So and so's at it again.' The class will . . . say something and without the name, I know who's doing it.

(Comments: Experienced teachers employ a similar method to build case histories on students. They also know how to effectively use school resources such as student cumulative records. It seems to me that the novice teachers make wise use of what is observed, even though they do not fully understand how to use the information in students' cumulative records.)

B-2 (pre-kdgn.):

> It's a problem to get him to produce. He's not even able to find the right work station yet.
>
> I have a new boy and he's not fitting in.

B-4 (first grade):

> Jill is bright and gets along well with the group.
>
> I am still surprised at some of my little boys. Leroy is a problem child . . . he kicks . . . at times when I'm not looking.

(Comments: Note the gender differences in the brief passage. Every student identified as a problem is a boy. Are girls really that much better behaved in schools than boys? This pattern of boys being more difficult is a consistent theme throughout the eight taped interviews in Section 1.)

My Class is a Group Now

In many of the earlier interviews, the beginning teachers singled out specific students to talk about. Later discussions focused on the class as a whole group. This is one of things that indicated that a group was forming.

B-2 (pre-kdgn.):

> Now they speak to each other and even help tie one another's shoes.

B-3 (fourth grade):

> The kids are great, good friends and very cooperative with each other. The bonds between them are neat.

B-1 (second grade):

> Now they are saying . . . "we".

Keys to Good Teaching

The new teachers gave explicit examples of what they noticed when they perceived things to be going well in their classrooms. These specifics can be seen as an extension of how one changes or "gets better" at doing the job.

B-1 (second grade):

> I have more time after school for myself now. Not all of my time is spent planning at night.
>
> Assigned work is being done in the allotted time.
>
> They understand expectations.

B-3 (fourth grade):

> You can't beat the clock. I have done something else new. I have the students take home their work folders.
>
> So the parents must return the work folder dated, with their signature and can make written comments or inquiries about their child's work.
>
> I know now who can do a better job.

The pre-kindergarten teacher noted that having the necessary tools made a difference.

B-2 (pre-kdgn.):

> Now I have a cart with all my supplies on it when I move from group to group.

The first-grade teacher made changes as a result of observing and interacting.

B-4 (first grade):

> At first I felt I had to have new activities for them every day. Now I know repetition is OK.
>
> I was giving them so much written feedback about what they did. They don't really care if their papers don't come back to them the next day.
>
> I learned just from talking to other people.

(Comments: By the third month of their teaching career, all four of the new teachers had begun to talk and act more like veteran teachers. Many of their concerns were similar to those of experienced teachers at the same time during the year. Time on the job seems to be the key factor that distinguishes any good novice from the veteran teacher.)

All Those Interruptions and Holidays

The experienced teacher gets ready for and is accustomed to many of the interruptions that occur around the holiday season. The novice has no way of really knowing what to look for or anticipate until it happens.

The beginning teachers began to experience the changing "face" of the school during the holidays and appreciate the effect interruptions can have on instructional time.

B-4 (first grade):

> Little things that you don't think about tend to take a lot of time and can interrupt the whole class schedule. Before Halloween, they would stop me right in a lesson to tell me about a costume.

B-3 (fourth grade):

> The Christmas program! You know, it's all a part of teaching, I guess--flexibility.
>
> . . . we had that one four day week and then the three day week of Thanksgiving . . . I knew that the next week was going to be the Christmas program . . . and we would have a Christmas safety assembly for the lower grades on Wednesday, then on Friday we would have the Christmas parties and there was only a half-day left. I knew we were not going to accomplish a lot, and there would be a lot of clean-up.

(Comments: These comments paint a vivid picture of how confusing, pressured, and frantic school can be around the holiday season. Compare this with what you might imagine going on in schools elsewhere at this time and what do you get? Not a time of calm and good will, but a group of educators trying to "keep the lid on" until Christmas goes by.)

Other topics discussed by all four teachers included appreciation of the contribution made by parent volunteers and concern about substitute teachers not finishing or following lesson plans.

In summary, the addendum focused upon issues and concerns that surfaced around the first of November and extended through the end of the Christmas break. During this time, the teachers recognized routine as necessary and of value in running a smooth classroom. In their discussions about lack of time to plan for diverse student needs, it was clear that they were experiencing some of the same problems the veteran teachers struggled with throughout their careers. Two of the four teachers talked about the physical environment of their classroom and related it to doing a good job. The experienced teachers put less value on bulletin boards.

Student biographies were developed, documenting what new teachers observed during daily activities. The second-grade teacher said, "They'll say something, and without the name I know who's.doing it." By early November, certain students could be singled out as a problem or a good student.

While earlier the new teachers singled out specific students to talk about, by Thanksgiving they were able to pinpoint group dynamics at work. The first-grade teacher captured how holidays and other interruptions affected all teachers when she said, "Little things that you don't think about tend to take alot of time and can interrupt the whole class schedule."

(Comments: Part of this research data points toward a need to recommend that new teachers be given assistance during the first months of school. November and December seem to be a critical time. It seems to be a point in the teachers' experience where they encounter problems that their preservice knowledge base was inadequate to handle. Again, experienced teachers can deal with these areas more effectively because they have a repertoire of responses which have been accumulated over time.)

Section 2: The Critical Teaching Months

The second section, "The Critical Teaching Months," covers a period from January through March, which is viewed by experienced teachers as the most academically productive period of the school year. Students understand that the celebrations and holiday festivities are over and it's time to get down to the business of studying. This period marks the mid-point of the calendar year.

Veteran teachers have regrouped students in reading and math so that every child is challenged to work to fullest potential. Class schedules and activities become routine. Both students and teachers are familiar with each other. Scholastic leaders usually emerge, and the less capable students are more easily identified or they "point themselves out" behaviorally. Depending on the school location, the student body is usually fairly stable by this time.

At this point, teachers become preoccupied with learning how to handle students with diverse learning styles and behaviors. Veeman (1984), in his longitudinal research on Perceived Problems of Beginning Teachers, identified eight problems that every new teacher will encounter. The participants in his study were first-, second-, and third-year teachers. His list included: classroom discipline, motivating students, dealing with individual differences, assessing students' work, insufficient and/or inadequate teaching materials and supplies, and dealing with problems of individual students.

Many of these problem areas were discussed by our four new teachers during interviews held during the months of January, February, and March. In the second section, we will divide these concerns into three areas:

1. Case Studies in Student Diversity: Our beginning teachers did not single these students out as discipline problems, but talked about them as students who were different from the majority of the class. Somehow preservice had not prepared them fully enough to understand how to work with the diversity of students in their classrooms. They would see a problem and want to help solve it, but lack the knowledge and, many times, the skill to do the right thing at the right time. Most of the content in Section 2 will be devoted to vivid case studies of students given by all four of our beginning teachers.
2. Goals, Philosophies and Formal Evaluations: By mid-year the new teachers talked about reassessing and evaluating their own practice, common philosophy held by their particular staff,

mandated goals by building administrators, and formal annual evaluations. Each of our new teachers made a contribution to the discussion on this topic.

3. **Teacher-Parent Relationships:** Our informants reflected upon how their relationship with parents could affect decisions in their classrooms. This too was an area of concern for all four beginning teachers.

Table 2: The Critical Teaching Months

PARTICIPANT	INTERVIEW
B-1 (Second Grade)	11-28-83
B-2 (Pre-kdgn.)	1-25-83
B-3 (Fourth Grade)	3-12-84
B-4 (First Grade)	2-7-85

Case Studies in Student Diversity

When the second-grade teacher was interviewed during this period she often made comparisons between the "smart," the "slow," and the "different" students. How did she learn to document the differences? In the following case studies she gives a vivid description of what she saw during daily student observations. In the first case study, "The Slow Learner Who Excels," the student frustrated her because he worked at such a slow pace but always handed in an excellent product.

Case Study #1: The Slow Learner Who Excels

B-1: He's just so slow, and you really have to pull it out of him. In his work he doesn't get anything wrong.

I've talked to the resource teacher and she gives him all sorts of work and he'll do it. He has a hard time talking and thinking at the same time. I'll ask him a question and he'll think for a long time. I try to give him as much time as I can. The kids get antsy and stuff like that and I just hold on. I'll hold on as long as I can and then I get tired and say, "Just say something. Just get it out, spit it out." Then he'll say the answer. Whew! Sometimes I can't wait all that time because I'm in a group discussion or working with the whole class.

His reading was kind of poor at the beginning, too; that's why he's in the first group. The others haven't grown as fast as he has. He can read all sorts of books. He's getting chapter books and things like, where the other kids are in small paragraph type books. So he is at a better reading level. He's taking a lot more in. He just has a hard time expressing it or telling me about it or something.

I: And so then you are basing this just on him responding slow?

B-1: I knew he was slow from the beginning just getting things out, but I didn't realize that he was able to take more in, to read harder words, to do harder level work. It's just because he wouldn't tell me anything. So I'd have to watch him and I'd notice the books that

he was picking out from the library or just certain things that he was doing. I could tell that he wasn't at his reading group level.

I: Tell me a little bit more, as best as you can recall, as far back as you can remember. What made you notice this change?

B-1: OK. How far back? It's just kind of progressive, it's kind of like I've gathered it along the way. It works into his math too; he does very well on his math. He's just slow. He was sick for three weeks and has been out of the classroom for allergies and all sorts of sicknesses. I've sent work home, and I told his mother, "Here's his work. I really would like to teach it because this is the stuff that he doesn't know." He was getting so far behind, I thought--well, maybe she could teach it. He needed instruction! She said she'd handle it and that she would give him math. He did it right away. He never needed help and he did a great job. There were reading directions up there and he could handle them too. His responses are slow but the kids are getting more used to him.

I: Does he bother them?

B-1: Yes.

I: Did you refer him to the Resource Teacher upstairs?

B-1: Yes. I don't know if she had taught him last year; I'm not sure about that. But we've talked about him the whole year because when you say a kid is sharp, how do you pick that up? You just know that he's picking up more. He just can't deliver it and that's why you can't evaluate him--because he doesn't really tell you anything.

I: Does he write?

B-1: Yes, he does write and he answers everything correctly.

I: Is the writing slow too?

B-1: No, his writing isn't slow. He has beautiful writing, the best handwriting in the class. I mean that, at his age, those things are very important. He's clear, neat, and he's right on. In the reading group he can answer the questions. Usually I take his group and I have comprehension questions that I ask them. But, as for asking him, it's really hard to get it out of him. If I give it to him, he'll write it down. And he can write the answers and they're correct.

I: What kinds of things have you noticed about yourself in response to him? What does it feel like to be a teacher who observes those kinds of behaviors in a student? What do you do?

B-1: Well, I kind of felt bad that I thought he didn't belong in here. Here I was putting him in the lowest group and it's discouraging him because it's all inside of him. This might be an extreme, but if all this knowledge is inside of him and he doesn't really know why he's in the lowest group or he doesn't know because he's getting everything right, he will think he's dumb. Kids are very perceptive; they know what group they are in, the highest or lowest. They also know if people think they're dumb or smart. And I think he's going to think that he's dumb because he can't relate all the time. He knows the other kids get fidgety but he still has all this knowledge in him.

I: So you measure him by what he puts on the paper.

B-1: Yes. He was reading to me some book and it was hard for him. It was slow, but the words were his level reading words. They were large words and words he hasn't had before. I'm thinking to myself "You can read that, you shouldn't be in the first-grade basal." He should be at least in the beginning second-grade basal. So I put him in the second-grade basal. We've read about two weeks in it and he is very pleased with the move. He likes being in the next group. For him to read orally is still something that's not boosting his self-image, but he words hard. I know that I have to tell him "You're doing a good job. Look, you got 'em all right." Point it out to him because self-confidence might be some of his problem in getting it out. His mother is in a lot because he's sick and he's the same way around her, maybe a little faster.

I: Does she talk slow?

B-1: No. She's very bright and she's very in tune. She seems like she's had some type of teaching background . . . . She knows how to ask kids questions and stuff like that, which is nice . . . . I really didn't know how to get information from him . . . . I kind of had an idea.

I: Where did the idea come from?

B-1: I . . . picked it up along the way; something must have given me a clue. His perception on things, even though he couldn't answer quickly . . . once he got something out, it was right and it wasn't an off-the-wall answer. You know, he was in tune to what was going on.

I: Do you remember though, initially, what made you notice him? What kind of a hunch made you start watching?

B-1: It was his reading books that he was getting during library time. I had noticed that they were larger books . . . smaller print . . . chapters, and much more than a paragraph and a huge picture. They weren't picture books.

I: How does he handle words that he doesn't know when he's in a reading group?

B-1: He sounds them out. I think he also uses the placement of the word. The hunch was that with his old reading book he didn't miss too many words. In the new one I haven't really found too many that he misses. It's just slo-o-o-w.

I. When he needs help with a word he doesn't ask you, or, if he asks you, is he still that slow? Is this consistent in everything? When he plays, is he slow too?

B-1: Yes, if he doesn't understand a worksheet, he'll say, "How do you do this?" When he comes up, you kind of know that he's going to ask for help anyway. Then I just kind of yank it out of him. I'll say, "Okay, there are 14 people piled up behind you."

I: Do your best to hurry on, huh?

B-1: I try to relax. I just know that I have to point it out to him and sometimes when you're around someone that's slow, you start to be slow.

I: I'd like to hear more about him. Would you make some little notes, if you can remember, on just some special things you're noticing about him in the future?

Case Study #2: The Uninterested Student

(These students usually group in the lower bottom level of the class. They have a short attention span, are disruptive, and do just enough to get by.)

B-1: There are four boys in the middle group. A little bit below average, maybe average. They are restless, so I know that I have to keep their attention on other things. I can't give them a full page to read; they'll complain it's too long a paragraph.

I: How do you know that they are restless? What do you see that tells you that?

B-1: They squirm, they bother each other, they look at other stories in the middle of someone else reading. They will go to the back of the book while they're flipping and say, "Oh, this is my favorite one . . . . Can you read this?" I make them put their finger on the place; even one finger, just so they can remember. Their bodies are very active. And so we point out the picture. I try to point that out before we read because if I don't, the kid that's reading is the only one paying attention. Everyone else has got their face glued on that picture. It takes longer with this group because they get distracted very easily.

I: Okay.

B-1: And it's really funny sometimes. But they all can read. I think that they'll be a lot better off when they get more serious about school.

I: Now, you had them look at the picture, and after they look at the picture and talk about the picture, then you move from there. What's the next step?

B-1: I try to keep them reading so they know that their turn is coming up, so they will know they should pay attention. It is a small group and sometimes, if I have a little problem, I might jump around. But then if we jump around, not reading one after another . . . there'll be someone that's off and they would get offended. Someone will say, "I thought we were on this page . . . and I'll say, "Well, you should have been reading." Their reading is poor. It's just that they're not interested. They've lost their love for reading.

I: Okay.

B-1: I know there've been controversial issues about how you should have your class reading, so I have them read in order. They'll read a paragraph on the page or they'll read the whole page; it depends on the length. I don't let them all read the same amount. Usually, if it's a large page, then one person reads a half and someone else reads another half the next time or a shorter page. They're in tune to that. After we read, we go through questions about the story.

I: Do you write them on the board?

B-1: No, they do them orally. Sometimes I do have them write it down. I always go over it first because then I know that they'll know what's going to be on the written paper.

I: You go over the questions?

B-1: Yes. I'll have a list of six questions or something. That's our comprehension of the story. And I'll go through the questions and then give the sheet and then they'll say, "I don't know how to do this." And I'll say, "You've just answered it. You do know." They're always afraid to get more work. Then they'll go back and read it and write it, but it's really a chore to get them to do it. It's the work, just getting them to work!

I: How do you monitor, when they're not working? What do you notice?

B-1: Where their eyes are . . . their pencils in their hands . . . if they're talking . . . if they're not sitting down in their seats or if they're up stretched across the room. It's got to be quiet to do the individual groups. Sometimes you have kids with pencils in their hands and they're just not working. Their pencil isn't working. And it's kind of easy from where I sit. I face the whole class and my reading group is with me, so I can see where everyone is. I can't catch everyone. Once in awhile, I'll yell across the room, "I don't see that pencil moving!"

I: Is it pretty consistent with the same folks who don't move their pencils?

B-1: Yes, usually I know the time span it takes most of the kids. It, you know, it varies. I know that so-and-so is a fast worker and so-and-so is a medium. If I walk over or if I notice a paper and it's not done and it's already been 10 minutes, I'll look at them and say, "You weren't working very much." "I know, but she was . . . ." They put the blame on someone else.

Case Study #3: The Daydreamers

(Three of our beginning teachers, B-1, B-2, and B-4, all reported that daydreamers were members of their classrooms. These students are usually not disruptive, but do not pay attention even when the teacher goes to great effort to involve them.)

B-1: It's bothering me that in group discussion it's usually the same people that are in tune. I try to place the children that aren't in tune closer to me or give them a job to do so that they are involved more. They don't raise their hands and I have to ask them questions. A lot of times it's not behavioral. They're not in their desk or bothering their neighbor or something like that. It's just that they're off in dreamland.

Our second-grade teacher discussed different types of daydreamers: (1) The Forgetful Daydreamer, (2) The Creative Daydreamer, and (3) The Loner Daydreamer. The last kind of student she discussed was the child with the (4) "I am Dumb" attitude.

"The Forgetful Daydreamer"

I: How long have you been paying attention to this daydreaming?

B-1: With some students it's new and with some students it's old. There are only three.

I: You want to talk about those children? You have three folks that you feel some frustration with because you can't draw them into the group. What have you noticed about them that is so different from the rest of the class, who might slip out to lunch periodically?

B-1: Well, one student, I've talked about him before. He's forgetful--you'll tell him to pick up his pencil and he'll say, "Oh, I forgot." After the third time, he's quick to forget. It's so funny. He'll go, "Oh, I forgot . . . ."

I: He's not being funny. Does he really forget?

B-1: Yes, and we've had conferences with his parents. It's always hilarious what happens. You'll call his row to go to lunch and he'll just be looking. Then he'll . . . wake up, and he doesn't really jerk, but you get the feeling that he jerked and he looks around and everyone's gone. "Hey, where did everyone go?" He'll ask just like that.

I: Okay.

B-1: Last year he was at a different school. When we ask, "What are you thinking about?" we try to be really gentle. Sometimes it's amazing . . . when he comes out of it, he knows the answer . . . sometimes he doesn't. That's hard because you don't even know if he's aware. It's really hard. It's so hard. It's funny but I notice him because he kind of sits at angle and he could be looking at me, but he just doesn't really move too much.

I: Have you suspected any hearing problem?

B-1: Yes. We had him tested for seeing and hearing and everything. It's like he really doesn't know where he is. Sometimes he is there and we excuse him, but I think he just forgets.

I: So the forgetfulness on his part is what you watch a lot?

B-1: Yes.

"The Creative Daydreamer"

I: What about these other two folk?

B-1: One of them, I think, is very creative. He goes off--he's not at his desk too much. I think he's scheming up something.

I: What made you notice what you call "creativity"?

B-1: Oh, I hear his vocabulary . . . his actions . . . his stories. He's quite on the hyper end of things and he likes to get attention a lot. We've really curbed him and are trying to get him to relate to other kids in our classroom. We tell him, "You're a part of this classroom and you have to obey the rules. You can't talk loud and you have to stay in your seat to get your work done." And we're really drilling him with this. He has to learn, has to understand that this is how you act in a classroom. That's what we're trying to teach him. I'll say, "Now is the time to work," and he'll look over. It's not the blank stare on his face; it's kind of like an expression. It's like he's talking to himself but his mouth really isn't moving, not in talking form, you know. It's kind of like a scheming idea. I can't really explain it; it's just the expressions on his face. We're on a behavior contract and work contract. Every day I evaluate him.

I: How long have you had him on a contract?

B-1: This is the third week.

I: Why did you put him on contract? Was it because he was just not paying attention?

B-1: He wasn't paying attention and wasn't staying in his seat. He's always disrupting the class.

I: When you talk about disrupting the class, what do you mean?

B-1: He would stand or just talk about other people's business, scream across the room. Then I'd tell him, "You can't do that," or scold him in some way. He'll say somebody did it first or "He's got my pencil." It's always something else that starts it, and yet he's the only one that is acting wrong.

I: But you'd notice something more--that he has potential to do a lot more than he does.

B-1: He is very bright.

I: Now what have you gotten from him beside the stories he's told . . . that said to you he was bright?

B-1: As far as work goes, he just doesn't have any problem with it. It's just sitting down and doing it that's the hard part.

I: Okay. Alright.

B-1: He uses imagination when he tells stories, or like in "Show and Tell" he always has something to say. Every time I ask a question, his hand shoots up before I finish my sentence. And he does have the answer. He likes to talk orally . . . .

I: But he won't write.

B-1: How can you write if you're walking around the room or bothering someone behind you? You can't just sit down and get going. If it's an oral discussion, he'll be alright. I'll say, "Wait a minute--you can't talk when so-and-so is talking." "No, I'm not interrupting. I have something to say." Just no manners! He's an only child and it's just him and his mom, so he gets a lot of attention. That could answer a lot, but he just isn't in tune with other people.

I: When you say you know he can handle the work, what do you notice?

B-1: I can't tell as much from things where he has to do a lot of thinking and writing down. At the same time, things that you circle or all sorts of worksheets . . . he gets those problems correct as long as he can do it fast and get on with his business. But if it's something that looks like "Man, I have to sit there for five minutes," he's off. He'll break his pencil five times so he can get up and sharpen it. One time he stopped me and said, "I can't go on with this. I don't have a pencil . . . ." When he told me that, I said, "Okay--quick, get it." I looked in his desk after school while helping him look for a book, and I pulled out this pouch of a million pencils. I just could not believe it! He just wanted attention. He wanted something else to do. That made me so angry that we had to stop the whole class for that.

"The Loner"

I: Tell me a little more about the third person. What's outstanding about this person?

B-1: This person is more off to himself . . . isn't very loud . . . had a lot of problems last year. I talked to his first-grade teacher. His parents got a divorce. I don't understand all of what happened, but he got behind in everything. The teachers said, "We had a lot of problems with him last year." I still haven't got a lot of detail on what happened. He hands in his work; it's mostly correct. His reading is good.

I asked his teachers from last year, "Did you notice any speech problems?"--because he says "baffroom" instead of "bathroom." They said, "He had so many problems last year that they didn't even notice anything. . . like speech." I thought, "Wow!" I even asked his mom. (We had parent/teacher conferences two weeks ago.) She said, "Come to think of it, that's right." I thought, "This kid is seven years, going on eight years old, and they're just now noticing this?"

He's quiet when he comes to talk to me. He whispers, "Miss ____, can I go to the baffroom?" And I'll say "bathroom." He doesn't volunteer for questions too much. He usually knows the right answer, but he won't raise his hand. But as far as off being in another world daydreaming, he's there. When I'm off somewhere else or going from child-to-child, he draws a lot. He'll draw all over his table and anything that's near him. He's very arty . . . I'm surprised at some of the things he turns out.

I: What kinds of things does he draw?

B-1: Just about anything. The day before we were making Indian vests out of paper bags, shopping bags. They were just to make Indian patterns or put on Indian language like "tepee," or something like that . . . . On the back he started out with kind of a fire and this fire was neat. I mean it went like really curvy and had all different kinds of spikes in it . . . . You had to look closly to see how he did it. He outlined it but it wasn't big, as far as thickness of it . . . . From far away, it just looked like a fire. It was neat!

Then the thing that scared me is that he made a cross in the fire. Since it's a Christian school, you know, that just sort of scared me. It looked very Satanic to me . . . a cross in the fire. I told him that it kind of worried me. Just by the tone of my voice, I think he got the idea. Then, on the front, where the vest comes together, he made two giant hearts and then across the middle, Jesus' cross connected two hearts. Here he was--I thought that it was Satanic, but I didn't tell him it worried me. And then on the front he wrote something very loving.

I: He's very versatile.

B-1: Yes. He can draw about anything. He takes his time; it's more creative than the other sort of things children draw.

I: Tell me a little bit about some of the other kinds of things that you are noticing. Those were really good insights. I mean you were very detailed and that's the kind of thing we're looking for . . . . Can you think of anything else that is outstanding since I saw you last?

"I'm Dumb"

B-1: We were thinking about holding him back. He is the lowest student--going to the Resource Room, mostly because he needs to learn to read in a group and because he needs to learn to read in a group and be more independent. He's always had a tutor. He's has a hard time sitting down, being independent. He was coming along and was excited about his math. We really raced him, tried to get him to do things quickly . . . . He was excited that he could do something.

Then the report went home and he had _N_ for "Needs Improvement" or _S_, that's "Satisfactory," and also some pluses or minuses. He had more _N_'s than his brother, who is in kindergarten. His brother is up with his class, is excited about school. Just completely opposite of my student. His brother came home with a super report and is really tuned in. I really didn't notice this until I talked to his parents, who said he was acting and he didn't really care. He had the "I don't care, I can't do it, I'm dumb" attitude. I talked to his parents. They said he just kind of sank when they compared the report cards. He really felt like he couldn't do a good job and was just not going to be a school person. It was very sad! The next day, after I talked to him, I watched him more carefully; he wasn't even interested in his math. I don't think I heard him say, "Can I do math?"--which I always heard before I gave out the report cards. That was . . . three weeks ago.

Beginning teacher B-2 taught pre-kindergarten four-year-olds in a Protestant school outside the city of Detroit. The school was in its second year as an elementary academic academy. What follows is B-2's account of student diversity in her classroom.

Case Study #4: The Daydreamer

B-2: These students appear hard of hearing, restless, and unable to stay on task. There are two more boys who are becoming really defiant. It's tiring--all day long!

This one little boy doesn't seem to respond. He seems to be not totally there! I don't know how else to explain that, but he stares off. You can call his name--he will just sit there and stare off the other way. It's not like he's saying, "I am going to ignore her." It is as if he honestly does not hear you . . . . I will say, "What were you supposed to be doing?" He will answer, "Playing." It's an incoherent kind of stare that he has on his face. His eyes don't look at you. He doesn't ever look guilty. He just comes up to the desk, holding out his hand like he expects you to spank him in his hand. He doesn't even try to bargain with you or explain what he was doing. It's like half of him is somewhere else.

I noticed him the first day he came to the classroom. He is very easily upset. I assume he must be threatened a lot by his parents, not brutally though. I think they do spank him quite often.

I don't have the slightest idea of how to work with him. It's just getting to the point where I know that I need to develop a plan to work with him.

I: Have you contacted the parents of this child?

B-2: Yes, but I have received no response from them. He can write very well. Sometimes he knows phonic sounds and sometimes he remembers his numbers. Other times he does not.

I: What does he do for you to know he doesn't remember?

B-2: You can ask him a question and he'll just stand there and stare off. It doesn't matter if he's in a group or in a one-to-one contact. His response is random and he's not excited about it. He acts like, "This just came to me . . . this is 'mat' . . . 'hat' . . . ."

I: What seems to excite him?

B-2: I haven't seen anything that excites him. He can be sneaky. At times he will pull on other children and if I catch him up, he will just drag his feet in coming.

Case Study #5: The Immature Student

B-2: The . . . boy is just immature. He whines, cries and sucks his finger. I noticed him in early December. You can't tell if his whining is a real problem. (His mother just had a baby.) Some people just speak with a whine. It's getting to the point where I know some of it is intentional. He really projects this baby image.

He'll come up and tap me, whining, when he knows he's supposed to raise his hand. He also crawls on the floor.

I: What do you think about, specifically, when you watch children?

B-2: As I mentioned earlier, I had a hard time. I had never worked with children that young. My expectations were far above their level. It was so frustrating. I think about how I have learned to tell when they really have to go somewhere and when they don't. You get to know the different personalities.

B-3, our fourth-grade teacher in an established Catholic school in a mid-Michigan city, talked about how she had observed diversity in students.

Case Study #6: The Inappropriate Actor

B-3: Jewel is a very disruptive, hyper girl who does not work up to her academic potential. However, when she concentrates she does very good work. . . . She is . . . inappropriate socially. She's always giggling at something. She will giggle even if someone walks across the room . . . . I learned she is a victim of incest.

Case Study #7: The Loud Talker

B-3: Errol is a husky, red-cheeked, beloved boy in my room. He has a husky voice that carries and you could almost recognize it anywhere. He's not unpleasant but he talks too much . . . to the point where he's disruptive.

His handwriting is better. His work is not great. He went to Florida the early part of February. I had been tutoring him after school so he could catch up. He was doing a good job on his papers and written assignments. He was experiencing a lot of success memorizing the subject and predicate of sentences. In application he slipped because he made a D on his test. He needs to slow down; he's always in a hurry and turns in messy work that I usually have him rewrite.

Case Study #8: The Nervous Student

B3: Bud is a real jerky and nervous kid. He talks real fast and tries to do or say a lot of funny things for attention. I don't know if it's insecurity or he's just hyper. I do know it seems real hard for him to be good even when he's trying. His mother died last fall.

Beginning teacher #4 is a first-grade teacher in a mid-Michigan middle-class suburban city. Here is her account of student diversity. (These are not stories about classroom discipline problems as such. Rather, they point up the fact that our new teacher didn't appear equipped to handle the different kinds of students and didn't know where to go for help.)

Case Study #9: The Angry, Aggressive Fighter

I: What have you been looking at in your classroom since we last talked?

B-4: I don't know. Everything has been revolving around a few major problems.

I: Okay. Was that specific children or the class?

B-4: Specific children.

I: Then would you like to think about who they are?

B-4: Sure, I've been thinking about it for months already. I'm just going to tell you about it now. Well, I have one boy, Leroy, I've been having quite a bit of difficulty with lately. It's been coming on for quite some time.

I: What kind of difficulty?

B-4: Well, he's a very, very emotional, aggressive, angry child, and he's not doing well academically at all. I've cut down his workload because he gets frustrated so often . . . .

I: What does he do to exhibit the anger?

B-4: He hits and pinches and yells at people, and confronts them and verbally attacks them a lot. I hear complaints about it a lot, although I don't see it . . . but I'm quite sure it's happening because I've come into the room sometimes and the kids don't know I'm watching and I see him doing things. He likes to jump over people while they are sitting down . . . . He wants to break dance in the middle of the floor and stand on his head and then he usually lands on people when he's coming down from this.

I've noticed a big change in his attitude toward me. He's really improved within the last month or so. He's been saying "thank you" and "Can you please zip up my coat?" . . . being very, very polite and nice to me, which he had not done before. His work is getting better; his writing is getting a little bit better. I give him a lot less, probably less than half of what I give the other children. As far as seatwork, if he's not overloaded he can complete it. He doesn't fall apart when I give him something back to correct like he used to. I'd say, "You have a few corrections to make," and he usually comes up to me for quite a bit of help with them but he doesn't get really angry, which he did before when he had corrections.
Not too long ago, I was in the teacher's lounge in the morning and the kids came running . . . . "Angie has a bloody nose and Leroy punched her." Angie came running in. She had blood everywhere . . . she was screaming . . . I thought she had broken her nose; there was so much blood she was just in hysterics. I said, "Send Leroy in immediately" . . . but Leroy didn't want to come in. He kind of sat in the hallway and started crying . . . He was tearing and just saying, "I didn't do it, I didn't do anything. She hit me first, she hit me first! . . . ." I finally found out from one of the teachers on duty that Leroy had learned from his cousin that Angie had said something about him. I don't know what it was. Leroy went up to her and started saying, "You did," and started walking towards her with a very angry look on his face. I have seen him do that to people and he's very intimidating because he's much larger than the other kids.

I: How old is he?

B-4: He eight and the rest of the kids are six and seven . . . so he was walking up to her, I guess, and she pushed him away . . . she's frightened. She could have run, she could have talked to someone else, but she pushed him away and he took that as "She hit me first!" And so he just punched her right in the nose and he ran to Mr. Art and said, "I didn't do it! I didn't do it! She hit me first!"

So I told him, "We talked about this before and I think we're going to need to call your mother." And he just went bananas, I mean, kicking and hitting with me, the whole bit. He was so scared--"I'm not going home, I'm not going home, I'm not!" Just crying . . . . I know he's very strictly punished at home, his parents are stern. But on the other hand, I kept thinking he knew that ahead of time. He has known the consequences and if he doesn't want to get sent home, then he has to behave himself at school.

His mother came down to the room. I guess she works in surgery at Stevens Hospital. She was in her surgery clothes and the whole bit; she works on the line or something . . . . Anyway, to make a long story short, she took him home. The next day he got to school one hour late . . . . His mom came in that afternoon and pulled me out of the classroom. She just wanted us to know she and her husband did chastise him at home, but it was not because he hit Angie, but because he was disrespectful to me, the teacher. She said that in her home children are to be respectful to adults no matter what. They have always brought their children up so that if someone does something to them they don't like and they're unhappy with a situation, they're to go and tell an adult and if that adult doesn't give them satisfactory action then they're allowed to just take care of it any way they see fit . . . .

I said, "Well, that's the way you want to handle things at home. Leroy knows the rules at school . . . . Leroy did not go and seek help from the teacher until after he had already attacked her, and then he ran up to the teacher . . . ." She told me, "Anytime something goes wrong, you give me a call; I'll be here."

So I told her, "I'm not going to threaten him telling him that I'm going to call you or that you're going to come over here, or I'm going to send a note home." I've tried to handle my problems with Leroy myself or, if they get to that extent, then I will talk to the principal. I also told her I feel really bad about this; Leroy has made a lot of progress. I said, "I think you ought to know that at last he's finally making some close friendships." This attitude that he has that he can hit other people, that he can verbally attack them, is the reason he doesn't have any friends, hardly at all. The other children are afraid of him; they are intimidated by him, don't want to have anything to do with him. I said, "What kind of way is that for a child to go through school, knowing that they don't have any friends?"

"I'm also worried because when I have called you in the past about Leroy and you have come into the classroom and talked to him, Leroy was terrified for the rest of the day . . . . I don't know what happens at home; I don't know how you handle discipline, but I do know he shows very negative results when he comes back into the classroom."

And she said, "Well, I don't want you to think that we just wallop him for anything . . . . Last night we sat him down and we talked it all out before we walloped him . . . . I told him that I didn't want any bad kids in my family . . . ."

I realized what this child lives with at home and there's no way anyone could tell me that a child that angry and hostile isn't getting that from home or somewhere. "Well, the next time anything happens, you call my husband," she said. "I was in surgery and I should not be coming over here . . . . He would not want my husband being here . . . so all you have to is mention that my husband is going to be here and that'll straighten him up."

So after school I went and talked to Sandy, the principal . . . . Leroy's mom had told her Leroy is so good at home; he does all the laundry, he does the dishes. His mom said . . . he has an hour and a half to do his chores. He has to do all the vacuuming and every single carpet . . . .

But what really got to me was when Sandy said that . . . Leroy's mom said, "I don't like Mrs. Glass . . . she's so young." You know that had to be behind it . . . his problems are probably because I'm so young.

So anyway, Leroy has had his off-and-on days since then . . . . I'm not sure whether there is some learning disability or whether or not he's under so much frustration and pressure that maybe that's hindering his performance . . . . I need to find out these things so we're going to have him tested, and his mother has finally agreed. The only thing she's concerned about is that he's not mentally retarded.

It's so hard, it's always like working with a time bomb . . . . Today he's been kind of moody, which is pretty usual. I don't know why, but I feel like he's trying to punish me. I mean that's a terrible feeling, but I do.

I: What has he done to make you think that?

B-4: Because I feel like I have to work so hard for my results. I mean I shouldn't feel this way, but sometimes I feel, "Why can't you just come up to me and say . . . "I'm upset about this or I'm having a hard time or can you help me do this?" I never know; I always feel like I don't know what's going to happen. It's so frustrating because I never know what I've done wrong . . . .

I: Could it be that Leroy is trying to find out how far he can push you, to find out if you really do care about him?

B-4: I guess, but I don't know. Well, today he was just kind of sitting there and I said, "Have I done something to make you angry at me?"

I: Is Leroy a black child?

B-4: Hmmm-mmm.

I: Oh well, that's part of it. You don't tell adults in the black culture when you're angry or sad, not if you're a child. That's disrespectful. So he could never say that to you. It's in his mind but that's something we don't do with our parents. You don't say that to adults because that's being really rude. So he can't talk, he can only hope that you will still like him. And I think that it's important for you to know . . . .

B-4: So he takes all his frustration out on me. Wonderful!

I: Well, because you're a safe target. You're safe and I think once you understand that, it becomes alot more bearable. You may be the only person that . . . he can be angry with who still shows him love.

Case Study #10: The Non-Talker

B-4: I got a call from Merle's mother. She said ". . . I really hate to bother you . . . but Merle is so upset. He's been crying all afternoon."

He didn't say a word to me. I didn't notice anything wrong with him during the day. Now I feel terrible this poor child's been unhappy all day.

She said, "I hear you've changed reading groups." Well, we have. The last week or so everyone has been moved to a new reading group and the reading groups have been shifted.

She said, "Well, Merle is just crushed." I asked why. She told me he had not been reading at school. "I don't know if you realize how important those reading books are to them. Merle just loves school; he just loves bringing home his workbook pages and I don't know if you realize that taking him out of that group has just really been detrimental."

I said, "I didn't take him out of a reading workbook or group. He's still reading in "Happy Morning."

She said, "Well, he said that today he was excluded from that group and so he's no longer in that reading group. I could not figure out for the life of me what she was talking about. And it finally dawned on me that while I was down with Leroy and Angie,the reading aide had met with my kids and she had excluded him accidentally in the reading group. He had taken that to mean "Well, I dumped from the group." So he spent the whole day upset, but didn't come to me and say anything about it.

Case Study #11: The Disruptive Talkers & Dreamers

B-4: I'm having a terrible time with my seating arrangement. I told you this before. These kids are turned around in their seat carrying on these conversations that I can hear across the room. They'd just talk and talk and I'm dying for some new management techniques. I'd say, "Angie, would you turn around please?" Then she'll turn around and start talking again. . . . I feel like they take advantage of me. The class knows they don't ever really get in big trouble, what can I do? Sometimes even when I raise my voice or something they get scared for just a couple of minutes but it wears off. And so I always feel like I'm rearranging those seats again. Today I said I have certain places where I will put people. I separate them all in this corner and that corner, but they don't care who they sit by. They don't care who they talk to. They'll talk to anybody.

I: Now, as you think about the class, are there other specific problem students beyond Leroy?

B-4: I have a few kids that I cannot believe their inability to sit still. I wonder whether there's some sort of nervous tension. It's like a disease where they can't sit still. And I had one boy . . . we had a lady come in today and show us how to weave. It was fascinating; the kids were all so intrigued. He was rolling over on his back with his feet up in the air and you never have his attention ever! I talked to his mother about it and she's very concerned. I was trying to help. I have a few more like that. It just seems like they're always off in another world. You know, that type of thing and the only problem is that it's contagious . . . like they're entertaining somebody else.

Goals, Philosophies, and Evaluations

Throughout our conversations over the year, all four new teachers talked about constant personal evaluation of their own practice, educational philosophies, some mandated goals and objectives and formal evaluations by the administrator in charge.

B-2, recalling in reflective thinking the educational philosophy of the Protestant school outside Detroit where she worked with kindergarten four-year-olds, said, "I really feel good here. All the teachers share a common Christian philosophy. I know the curriculum well--everything is accessible and organized."

B-1, our second-grade teacher in a mid-Michigan Protestant school, talked about personal goals she had put together with the help of the school principal. She was to come up with a plan to combine some of her weaknesses and strengths and apply them in her own practice. She described the process in this manner:

B-4: I made most of my goals to December just because half year occurs around Christmas and Thanksgiving time. I don't know; I thought I could remember more in December and I did have mandated goals that I had to make with my principal. I could choose the time, and I chose the first week in December. This week or next week we will have a conference on my goals.

I: What kinds of goals did you have?

B-4: We were to choose a strength and a weakness and combine them to see if we could put together something that I wanted to get accomplished. I combined two things that would meet each child's needs. I chose one strength that the principal had helped me with. I looked at things I'm tuned in to--individual's feelings and emotions or just picking up particular things about children. Not just looking at their work, but noticing them as students and as persons. A weakness is that I don't think I get to their level as much as I would like. I also have to find more work or find out what they can put out or do. I have a lot of kids who need enrichment. My goal is to meet each child's needs. I have a large classroom, but this is my goal--to have each child learn to his fullest potential.

B-3, who worked in a Roman Catholic fourth-grade classroom shared her formal evaluation experience, stating, "It was really bad!"

B-3: The principal came in to observe me for my evaluation and the kids were really misbehaving. They even sat on the shelves near the window; they had never done that before, except at special times . . . She wrote that on my evaluation. I didn't sign it yet because I don't think that should have been put on there. I should have a chance to explain to her what was going on. I should have stopped everything and sent everyone back to their seats. I must have had a lot on my mind. There's a lot of frustration with myself because I knew what to do but didn't do it . . . .

B-4, who taught first grade in a middle-class urban mid-Michigan public school related her story about staff, administrators, and her formal evaluation.

I: The last question is: How do you feel about your interaction with the teachers, the administrators, and the parents? Anything new in that area?

B-4: I feel more comfortable than ever now with the other teachers. And Sandy (the principal) too. I really like her a lot. She's been so supportive of me. There have been times--especially like when I had to write up those forms on Leroy. Oh, I had my evaluation too . . . .

I: How did that go?

B-4: It went really well.

I: Oh, good.

B-4: I was very happy . . . I was just a nervous wreck 'cause she was in quite a bit, just watching and taking notes and then sometimes she would leave without even having said anything. And I always wondered, you know when someone is watching you, you notice so many more things, like I wish Shawn would quit talking. I had one kid up like this with his sweater swinging around like a helicopter, and I'm like, "Oh, my God!" Things that they don't ever do, they do when someone's watching the classroom. But it went really well. I still feel my youth tends to be a problem once in awhile. I still feel like the teachers or the parents think, "But she's so young."

Teacher-Parent Relations

All four of the beginning teachers talked about teacher-parent relations and some of the ways they affected or influenced decisions in the classroom.

B-1 told about her relationship with parents, as a new second-grade teacher in a Protestant school.

B-1: I feel like I know the kids better because of their parents.

I: Do you want to talk about how you notice that?

B-1: Well, their parents give me feedback on what happens at home. They talk about certain things that. . . were important enough to the kids to tell their parents. So I can see the things that they like or don't like. We find out so-and-so really likes math and I'll think "Really?" . . . he really doesn't seem to like it. I might say an encouraging words to a child--"Oh, you like math. Why don't you do some more . . ." And one mother came in, saying "I think my son can do better; I think he's lazy. He's got a bad attitude." I said, "You're really perceptive. You're right; he is . . . . I don't know what he's taken in because I can only tell what he gives out . . . ." She said, "I should push him and stay on top of him." It was good for her to tell that to me. I need to push from both ends too.

> And so now I say, "Don't even come to me," when he says he doesn't want to do something. I say, "Just sit down and do it; you handle it."

B-2 related some of the pupil's behaviors regarding what she saw in the parents of her kindergarten four-year-olds.

> B-2: I know all their parents. A lot of times when I look at them I'm thinking about the kind of parents they have. They are so much like their parents . . . . I have a little boy who runs everywhere he goes. I couldn't figure out why; then I met his mother. She runs and skips everywhere she goes--to the car, even in the parking lot. The other day she visited the room. As she left, she went skipping down the hall. Most of these parents are young, in their early twenties. They are kind of bouncy and full of life.

B-3 tells of an unpleasant encounter she had with a room parent in her fourth-grade classroom in a Roman Catholic school.

> B-3: She came in Friday and kept me until 4:30 p.m. It ruined my whole weekend. It was the same week the class had been so rotten. She had three complaints. The first one I considered important; the other two were nonsense and those were the two she spent most time discussing.
>
> (#1) After the Valentine Party a few kids discovered some phrases with double meaning, but her daughter did not catch on and went home and related . . . to her mother. I had been using the phrase "Do it" when I told the class to get busy. Well, some of the kids picked it up and started saying, "Do it." I noticed at spelling time they would look at each other and smile like they were getting something out of it. "Big deal," I thought. So I ignored it. The daughter was later offended when she caught on, according to the mother.
>
> Complaint #2 had to do with a boy burping during the party and three kids laughing. This parent talked about how loud and rude those three boys were to her as they had laughed right in her face. They could have been laughing at anything, but she took it personally. I don't think they would be that cruel to anyone. She acted like they did it every day. It was at their party, not during class.
>
> Complaint #3 was about some music the kids were bringing from home. The class could bring in their favorite records to play the last period on some Fridays. Many

> of them brought Michael Jackson's song "Thriller." She didn't think that was appropriate music to play in school and didn't want her daughter exposed to this kind of music . . . . I didn't see anything wrong with it . . . . She acted like it was a moral heavy-duty wrong . . . . It was like she was back in the sixties, with Vietnam, hippies, and drugs.
>
> I talked to my principal about it. She was understanding, but said she wouldn't use it in her class. She didn't say I couldn't. She suggested that, because of the nature of the hyperactive students in my room, it might be better to ban the idea of favorite music on Friday.

Section 3: The Home Stretch

The period after spring vacation till the end of the school year can be thought of as the busiest and most stressful time of the year. Generally, the time span is from April to June.

Pupils are reassessed, regrouped, and carefully monitored by teachers. These careful observations help the teacher to decide whether the student's academic and social growth merits promotion or retention.

Table 3: The Home Stretch

PARTICIPANT	INTERVIEW TAPE	DATE
B-1 (Second Grade)	Tape #8	6-7-84
B-2 (Pre-Kdgn.)	Tape #7	5-16-84
	Tape #8	6-27-84
B-3 (Fourth Grade)	Tape #6	6-11-84
B-4 (First Grade)	Tape #7	6-3-85

The final interviews with our four beginning teachers reveal their retrospective thinking about the problems faced by beginning teachers in their first year of teaching.

Student Self-Control

Teachers talked about how they noticed students change over the year from being too talkative and disruptive to being considerate, well-mannered, individuals who functioned cooperatively in the classroom.

Dow (1979) in her book *Learning to Teach: Teaching to Learn*, which was based on her work with student teachers, reported that learning to teach intensifies one's awareness of the importance of learning about oneself as well as about others. Students, in learning to teach, also learn to observe--in both a personal and academic sense. Her work offers illustrative case studies of "doing" and "seeing" among student teachers.

One area that our novice teachers talked about regularly involved the consistent behaviors they observed in students over the year.

B-2 (pre-kdgn.):

> I have seen a lot of growth in self-control since September. Little things they did earlier in the year, I don't see anymore. For example, if a piece of crayon fell to the floor, all of them would try to get it at once. Everybody wanted to go to go to the bathroom at one time. I see a lot of growth in these areas.

Teacher-Parent Relationship

A problem area discussed in Section 2, all four beginning teachers indicated that help was needed in how to effectively communicate with parents.

B-3 (fourth grade):

> There was one parent who came to school too often. Someday that will be a problem . . . for her daughter. The child is too young to understand right now.
>
> Dealing with this mom hasn't been all negative either. In the beginning of school, it seemed she was there forever. Near the end, she came less and was not really critical. She would sit outside the door.

B-1 (second grade):

> In one of my classes last year I studied that home life has everything to do with it. You can learn it, put it down on paper, but until you see it, it does not click. It's like a TV show; it's not real to you. In hindsight you see the whole thing.
>
> . . . next year I will know how to anticipate some of these things.

B-2 (pre-kdgn.):

> I need to learn how to set up a system to notify parents of children who are not passing inspection and getting assignments in on time. I basically relied on notes. Next year, I will make a standard letter.
>
> It is hard to be tactful to parents of students who are not doing well. I had problems wording what I wanted to say about my four-year-olds who were failing. Many of the parents didn't even think of pre-kindergarten as being in school yet.
>
> The parents are a lot more supportive; they give positive comments about how well I am doing.

Teacher-Administrator-Staff Relations

Discussion involved how helpful the new teachers found experienced teachers, and other staff aid and advice. They seemed more strongly affected by feedback from the principal.

B-3 (fourth grade):

> The principal went to lunch with my team partner and discussed me. It was good to hear from my partner. I knew the principal would never say it to me. She thought I had done a good job for someone my age . . . I had come in and turned things around for the better. It was great to hear that . . . . I assumed she would have let me know if something was wrong. That made me feel really good. I needed feedback.

B-2 (pre-kdgn. Hired two weeks after school started.):

> I was late for meetings, devotion. No one told me, so I just asked around.
>
> The headmistress came to me the second week and said, "Let's talk." She was compassionate about my situation.

Our first- and second-grade teachers concurred that conversations and specific directions from their administrator and fellow teachers were helpful as well as necessary to understanding school expectations.

(Comments: These examples could serve to show that new teachers need direct support, supervision, and specific directions during the initial stages of learning to teach. The duration of supervision will depend on the teacher growth and understanding of how classrooms work and how schools are managed. Could it be that we program new teachers to fail by not providing necessary support and leadership in the most critical part of their career?)

A Review of Academics for Promotion and Retention

When new teachers consider students for retention and promotion, their norms resemble those of experienced teachers.

In their work on diagnosis and evaluation Brophy and Evertson (1976), in Learning from Teaching, made these comments about evaluation: "Teachers in general felt that IQ was important but was not the only or even the best indicator of student potential, and that more specific information was needed in order to know what skills a child had mastered."

Our novice teachers relate their personal observations.

B-1 (second grade):

> I just did report cards and I have seen growth in every single one of them. Sometimes it's not as much as you would expect, but my students did very well on the Iowa Test Basic Skills. Most of my kids were in the high 80-90 percentile. That made me feel good.
>
> I was afraid that, being a new teacher, the scores would be low and the kids would suffer. But I think they benefited from having a first-year teacher. Hopefully, they will get it next year from a more experienced teacher.
>
> I concentrated on the skills . . . . I was afraid I wouldn't get through it or they wouldn't get the skills solid . . . . I wish I had done more language arts and more drama and things like that.

B-2 (pre-kdgn.):

> The pupils look like they want to say, "If we have to say the ABC's once more or count to 100, we will scream."
>
> The numbers, letters and phonics--there's just no way to make it stick besides repetition.
>
> At the beginning of the year, I was in the babysitting business; there was pant wetting; they couldn't tie shoes or button buttons. There wasn't much curriculum going on. But now I have to make sure they can read solidly and that their skills are solid.

Our fourth-grade teacher expressed pride at the academic gains her students had made during her first year as a teacher.

B-3 (fourth grade):

> I looked at the reading folders being sent to the new teacher. As you go along, you don't realize how much you are doing until the end. Every single kid was up to grade level in reading this year. That was a nice feeling.

B-4 (first grade):

> I was making sure kids were leaving first grade with skills they should have.
>
> I tried to make things fair and equal. I would try to make mental notes of who I had or had not called on.

Students with Emotional, Social, and Physical Problems

Specific students were seen as disruptive and low achieving across the year. Beginning teachers in their final interviews reported that a lack of background knowledge of students' health records, emotional and social behaviors hindered them from doing a better job.

Emotional problems were described as negative behaviors manifested by students that interfered with their learning and, in many cases, disrupted the class. Students with these problems could be passive aggressive where they didn't trust or cooperate with others. There were others who were active and hostile and would even do physical harm to those around them.

Our second-grade teacher reported that, in her class alone, there were three students receiving professional help.

B-1 (second grade):

> After I had seriously considered writing a referral on a boy in my room, his parents came up and told me.

> Another student had transferred in, so his file came late. He had been referred for professional help in kindergarten and first grade and his parents had never told me. They had sent their pastor in to talk to me instead. He has his job, but that kind of professional counseling is not for him to do. I wanted to retain him and the Resource Teacher agreed with me, but his parents are fighting it and said "No."

Social problems were associated with how well or poorly the student related to classmates at work and playtime. Both the second grade and the pre-kindergarten teachers noticed enormous peer pressure operating in their classrooms.

B-1 (second grade):

> Caren is shy; she never looks up . . . . You can hardly hear her when she reads orally. The last month and a half she has come out of her shell. She is chosen in sports at recess, and is a good team member.
>
> Todd wanted to be popular, but in the wrong way. He does mean things to other kids. He passes the limits.
>
> It was really frustrating. I spent a lot of time with him. I got to the point where I was angry with him. I didn't like him anymore, his attitude or as a person.
>
> There are just kids who have social problems and a combination of things. You can't sit with just six kids to work and yet they can't sit together either. You have to space them out.
>
> You can see them one minute as best friends with their arms around each other; the next minute they are fighting and hating each other. It's peer pressure!

B-2 (pre-kdgn.):

> One day I was asking a boy to answer a question. A girl turned around and told him the answer so he would like her. They are always asking "Do you like me?", "Will you be my friend?".
>
> Before, all they needed was my acceptance, but now it's a peer type thing.

Physical problems were defined by the beginning teachers as anything that interferes with the normal functioning of any parts of the body.

B-3 (fourth grade):

> Errol always rushes through his work. He had not been classified as dyslexic; now we've found out he is.
>
> I just didn't know. The symptoms are real hard to tell. We didn't know where or what to look for. Curly was my other student who had a hard time settling down. He was on medication.

(Comments: These emotional, social, and physical problems reported by novice teachers would lead one to believe that this should be a focus area of preservice and inservice training. Where else can these teachers learn to interpret observations and understand information in students' records? Should such critical information be left to chance when these things can so radically affect classroom management?)

Teacher Confidence

After teaching one year, our four beginning teachers all agreed that confidence in one's ability to do the job well and to be in control of the work situation are key elements in good teaching.

B-1 (second grade):

> I got more confidence in my teaching. I realized that I am the head of this class . . . . I am a real teacher. There's more to teaching than reading and arithmetic.
>
> You put your personality into it; your mind can be working the same time you are teaching and working.
>
> I keep coming back go the word--confidence. The students will judge me, but I can teach!

B-2 (pre-kdgn.):

> At the onset, it was very intimidating. I remembered feeling the same way I did when I was student teaching. It was a feeling of being incompetent. . . . I knew I had the skills but it was, like, can I make all this come together? Being the youngest teacher on the staff didn't help any either . . .

B-3 (fourth grade):

> It is important to establish yourself. I can't wait to be there on the first day next year. I plan to develop expectation and work on relationships early.

B-4 (first grade):

> I feel very different personally than I felt right at the beginning; I guess my confidence in myself has improved.

(Comments: Confidence for these teachers seems to be connected to understanding their role and being able to point to visible accomplishments. Perhaps part of the preservice and inservice training should be to help teachers clearly understand their role.)

Interruptions and Schedule Irregularities

This problem, common during the fall months, surfaced again during the period from spring vacation to the end of the school year. Part of the "home stretch" frustrations were attributed to classroom interruptions in the form of announcements, visitors, and schedule irregularities caused by assemblies, fundraisers, and field trips.

B-2 (pre-kdgn.):

> A lot of their restlessness is due to change of daily schedule. All those bake sales, fundraisers,the open house, and plays for assembies.
>
> We are interrupted for many things. Other kids come into the room to make announcements. The class had

> their school pictures taken. I lost the whole morning with that. Open house went on for three or four days.

B-3 (fourth grade):

> The school calendar is too full. There are assembly programs, Officer Friendly, especially in the spring. Every week there's some silly half-hour program.

(Comments: These interruptions are a way of life in schools. What might be helpful is to develop a list of some of these anticipated schedule irregularities and give them to new teachers. These events can be anticipated and flexibility can be encouraged to help make the transition smoother from event to event.)

Classroom Management

Classroom management continued to be a real problem area. Brophy and Evertson (1979) advised that teachers with inadequate classroom management skills are probably not going to accomplish much. The key to successful classroom management is prevention of problems before they start, not after they have begun.

It seemed to me that these teachers were making every effort to do a good job, but were losing the class at times because they didn't have control of classroom interruptions. The schedule irregularities seem to set the stage for unnecessary talking and unusual restlessness.

(Comments: If teachers had known about these programs and put them into lesson plans, I strongly feel this would have minimized the management problems. It would be interesting to see whether it made a difference if someone took the time to do this for new teachers. Experienced teachers get frustrated, but have learned to "roll with the punches." You can have lessons well planned but when these interruptions occur, the stage has to be re-set to start all over again.)

I Just Didn't Know

The final category in this section deals with unclear expectations of new teachers and things they are expected to know but which no one bothered to teach/tell them.

Included in the long, vivid example given by B-1 are suggested areas for future research efforts, preservice and inservice training. The teacher was asked to think of ways experienced teachers can be helpful in their first year.

B-1 (second grade):

> I was supposed to do grades a certain way, but when I found out, it was almost too late . . . .
>
> An experienced teacher came in and said, "I had started doing my records and thought of you. We have never shown you how do do this, have we?"
>
> There's just so much the older teachers take for granted. They say, "This is the routine." They understand the student files and transfers and students who have been tested and researched.
>
> The business part of teaching: the recordkeeping and the grading. I wish I had known the questions to ask when you go to a new school. If I could have filed some questions the first day, like "What's different about this school?" things would have been a lot easier.
>
> I guess you just have to walk through it. You learn you can't know the school system at once. You have to be flexible as a new teacher.
>
> It's . . . the expectations. I would feel funny ordering a drink at a bar if some of my students or parents saw me. I work in a Christian school. I didn't sign anything that said I couldn't when I came.

> This year has taught me a lot about social things. What I can and cannot do or say.

(Comment: Is time all that is needed to help these new teachers, as the second teacher concluded? Don't we have some uniform ways and patterns of doing things that we could share with novice teachers to make their first year less stressful? All the things she talked about brought back clear memories of my first year on the job, some of which were painful and many experiences I wish never to remember again. There were so many things I just didn't know and nobody told me. I think I know some things that would benefit my new colleagues, but there is no structured forum in our system for this kind of sharing at this time.)

Recommendations

Feiman-Nemser and Buchmann (1985) found in their work on preservice students, The First Year of Teacher Preparation: Transition to Pedagogical Thinking, that "From years of teacher watching elementary and secondary schools, preservice students have many ideas about what teachers do. Since teaching is concerned with learning, it also requires thinking about how to build bridges between one's own understanding and that of one's students."

Beginning teachers are just one step removed from this process, so they are left on their own to make sense of how to build these bridges. It seems that we program new teachers to fail by withdrawing support or helping develop a clear understanding of their role in the teaching process.

During our one-year interview conversations, these four new teachers made it clear that they needed continuous support, supervision, and specific direction beyond what was given in their first days on the job. Because we know that experienced teachers are as busy and sometimes as frustrated as the novice, the responsibility of helping the newcomer needs to be placed in the hands of administrators and teacher supervisors, with mandated times and places for this training. New job roles could be created for successful experienced teachers who might be interested in a new challenge.

Our recommendations are limited because of parimeters of our data. However, it cannot be disputed that the interviews have revealed some areas that need immediate attention in preservice and inservice training. Because teachers are not sure of what is expected of them, I feel the following suggestions would be helpful:

1. A set of standard criteria should be developed by schools of education, teacher supervisors, new teachers, experienced teachers, and administrators. These standards could grow out of the needs that are recorded in teacher journals and conversations. The criteria could be modified to fit the needs of a particular school community.
2. Some of the areas I see as needing attention include:
   A. Annual review of school business
      1. Record keeping
      2. Grading
      3. Organization of content areas

4. Classroom management and anticipated problem areas that are peculiar to that community

5. School calendar and scheduled events

6. Philosophy and goals of the school

B. Description of the community

1. Physical changes, new business, removal of old establishment

2. Demographics--population composition

a. coordinate school and community expectations

b. list old and new questions

c. attend meetings beyond staffings

d. committees to know about and become involved in

e. professional organizations

3. Plan of action

A. Teachers can meet weekly with a buddy to compare notes and discuss questions and concerns found in journals. Both novice and veteran teachers can work together in a staff development program.

B. Buddy system can be set up with teachers at the same grade level but alternate goals be considered.

C. Have group indicate when goals have been reached and problems solved so the process remains progressive.

D. Teachers may opt to leave group after the first two months if it's not helpful, or they may remain as long as they feel it's necessary.

E. This will aid teachers in achieving a shared philosophy about practice, as well as provide them with group support.

F. Finally, these recommendations should be considered within the current structure of the work day. There ought to be a restructuring in the profession so teachers, both new and experienced, can be reflective about their practice, share their experience, and continue to learn as teachers and grow as students.

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Chapter 7

COMPARISON OF BEGINNING AND EXPERIENCED TEACHERS:

FOCUSED GROUP INTERVIEWS WITH BEGINNING AND EXPERIENCED TEACHERS

This chapter compares beginning and experienced teachers' ways of seeing. These differences emerged during four separate focused group interviews conducted after the group has viewed a video tape of a Boston teacher's classroom. The study presents an overview of the viewing sessions and interviews, the teacher's first impressions, their responses during a second closer look, and their ways of seeing the tape in a final viewing session. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion of common issues of practice.

Margaret Brown

COMPARISON OF BEGINNING AND EXPERIENCED TEACHERS:

FOCUSED GROUP INTERVIEWS WITH BEGINNING AND EXPERIENCED TEACHERS

Introduction

After completing observation, videotaping and interviews with beginning and experienced TPWS teachers, we invited both groups to participate in a series of four meetings. These meetings were designed to create an additional data set that could be used in studying the thinking of the beginning and experienced teachers. In addition to providing a comparison of the ways in which beginning and experienced teachers reacted to daily classroom occurrences, these meetings also provided insight into how teachers viewed each other's practices.

Meetings began in December, 1984, and continued through February, 1985. The purposes of the meetings were: (1) to uncover additional information on similarities and differences between experienced and beginning teachers in their responses to classroom events; (2) give recognition to teachers who participated in the project and to provide closure for their participation; and (3) to stimulate thinking by these teachers on the varying ways they perceive the same classroom events.

Organizing for Viewing

This series of four meetings was organized by Daisy Thomas and Margaret Brown, with the assistance of Frederick Erickson. The first meeting was a plenary session for both sets of teachers, the second was held for experienced teachers only, while the third meeting was for beginning teachers. The fourth and last meeting brought the two groups together again. All teachers involved in "Teachers' Practical Ways of Seeing" attended these meetings, with the exception of Beginning Teacher #1, who moved from the research area. Two of the experienced teachers were only able to attend one or two of the meetings.

The Task

The focus of each meeting was a three-to-five minute segment of videotape. These segments were filmed in the classroom of a Boston teacher who had participated in an earlier study conducted by Frederick Erickson in 1974. Teachers viewed the events of this classroom and recorded their reflections.

Structure for Reflecting

Teachers were given a format designed to organize their thinking about what they saw during each viewing. This written form asked each teacher to do the following:

1. Summarize briefly in narrative form your first impressions.
2. List questions you would like to have answered by analyzing the tape.
3. List the problem or challenges you see in this tape.
4. Record your observations and judgments/interpretations about what you saw.

These four categories were used for our first three meetings. We changed the format for the fourth meeting. Problems/challenges, observations, judgments/interpretations were retained, and we added the following questions to obtain further reflection on the viewing:

5. How have your impressions changed? Why?
6. How did viewing this classroom make you think about your own teaching?
7. Did you see anything that might be an educational influence?

This format established the agenda for viewing. It will also be used as an organizer for this analysis.

During our first meeting Erickson gave a brief overview of the videotaped classroom. He described the framework from which this four--minute segment was taken. A brief description of the classroom was given which provided the following facts: (1) time of day, (2) age of the children, (3) socioeconomic status and ethnic makeup of the community, and (4) information on what had taken place just prior to the taped segment.

After this brief description, teachers were given observational analysis forms on which to record their objective impressions of what they saw. Following our first viewing, time was taken for sharing impressions and discussing the problems and challenges of the videotaped teacher, as well as for the development of guiding questions to answer during the second viewing. Observers were asked to reevaluate problems and challenges raised during the first showing. The fourth and last task of this session was a written account by the teachers of their final judgments/interpretations on how the filmed teacher performed in her classroom.

Looking at the Taped Segment

The scene shown on the tape is of a small reading group composed of five children. It takes place in a kindergarten/first grade class in a Boston suburb. The children's parents are second generation working-class and middle-class Americans. There are 10 first-grade children in attendance during the second-half of the day. These same children had been pupils of the teacher in kindergarten the year before. It is an early September scene; the children are still becoming accustomed to classroom routine.

The first segment of the film shows the five children in the directed reading group in the process of getting started. The rest of the class is in another part of the room doing seatwork, under the supervision of the same teacher.

First Impressions

Looking over each set of teachers' impressions of the videotaped classroom, we find their responses limited to a few short phrases. For example:

Experienced Teachers

Mrs. Tobin:	"Begins new reading book--explains to others that they should be quiet while she has a group lesson--going over table of contents."
Mr. Fairley:	"Introduction to reading book."
Mrs. Gates:	"This is a reading lesson."
Mrs. Smith:	"Teacher conducting a reading lesson--four pupils at a table on one side of the room."

Looking at these statements, we find that they record only a brief sketch of what has taken place. As we look at the writing of the beginning teachers for a description of this same scene, the same meager framework is apparent.

Beginning Teachers

B.T.:	"The teacher is working with a small reading group (five students). She calls their attention to the table of contents."
B.T.:	"Gave reasons for directions."
B.T.:	No response . . . did not attend the first meeting.

After reading these descriptions of what both sets of teachers saw, we might assume that these teachers are primarily interested in what and how the teacher teaches and the dynamics of the group, since so little was written on the physical set-up of the group or on descriptions of its members. So little attention was paid to the members of the group, in fact, that there was disagreement between two teachers in their written accounts of how many children actually were in the reading group. This could be construed as meaning, "This isn't important--let's move on to what is." This attitude was reinforced by what teachers wrote when they added their perspectives about what was going on. They took a contextual view of the setting, one which emphasized important aspects of classroom organization, instructional management, and style of teaching. They wanted to know more about these areas. The "how" and "why" of the Boston teacher's methods were questioned or commented upon by both sets of teachers. It became an important focus of their comments.

Among experienced teachers, for example, Mrs. Tobin commented: "Teacher is doing two things at once, i.e., listening to kids read and telling Raymond to sit down--teacher doesn't mind children talking without raising hands to be recognized." Obviously, the Boston teacher and Mrs. Tobin held different beliefs about how children gain entry to speaking in a group.

Experienced teacher Mr. Fairley was more interested in how lessons were presented and in the goals of teaching. She wrote: "I wasn't sure what the lesson was about--teacher changed directions a great deal--not enough time for children to react--could teacher have said more to motivate and gain attention?"

In contrast to the first two experienced teachers, Mrs. Gates had a more understanding and approving view of the Boston teacher's style. She presented an opposite reaction when she wrote: "Well organized--good control of students." (Mrs. Gates was the only member of the group who made use of videotapes to study teachers as part of her work on an advanced degree. She also had begun to view tapes of her classroom to examine her own teaching. Moreover, her racial background and varied teaching experience gave her a different cultural and environmental perspective.)

The fourth experienced teacher, Mrs. Smith, was more controlled in her remarks on how the reading group was proceeding. Commenting upon the children's interest in the lesson and upon the teacher's role, she noted that "The others of the group became involved with the lesson once the teacher could devote her attention back to them." Mrs. Smith's remark seemed to reinforce Mrs. Tobin's statement that "The teacher was doing two things at the same time." Both felt that the Boston teacher should have done a better job of preparing to teach by dealing with potential distractions before beginning.

As I examined the beginning teachers' comments, I looked for ways in which they agreed or disagreed with the experienced teachers. Among beginning teachers, Beginning Teacher #3, examined the way children handled distractions. She jotted in her notes: "Some children are trying to focus--the children are at various 'energy levels'--whole group distracted by classes exchanging in the hall--starts focusing again just as teacher comes back from asking the children to quiet down." Though B.T. #3 concentrated on how children handled outside distractions and the effects these distractions had on their focusing, she didn't mention the role of the teacher in controlling the noise.

Beginning Teacher #2, also discussed distractions; however, she was more concerned about instructional methods and teaching strategy. She observed: "(Teacher) not very motivated to read, thus children seem uninterested--Round Robin not effectively involving children--lost children with disturbance in hall." B.T. #2 also looked more critically at the teacher's role as a motivator and noted her teaching strategies.

Finally, Beginning Teacher #4 gives us a last look at first impressions. Her focus is on the individual child as she writes, "One of the girls at the table has difficulty sitting still and the teacher has to ask her to pay attention several times."

As I reviewed what the teachers had written about the Boston teacher's expectations, teaching strategy, and preparedness, as well as and about class attentiveness and environmental factors, I put together issues that both groups, collectively or as individuals, saw as important or problematic. Issues that most concerned experienced teachers were:

1. Setting the stage for uninterrupted and sustained teaching.
2. Turntaking and routine rules for participation in group discussion.
3. Clearly-defined and presented lessons.
4. Highly interesting and motivating lessons.
5. Good control of students.

Beginning teachers expressed concerns about:

1. Children focusing on lessons.
2. The importance of the individual child.
3. Presenting interesting and motivating lessons.

Now for the Questions

The short segment of tape shown to TPWS teachers left them with many unanswered questions. They wanted to know more. They wanted to know why the Boston teacher used her particular approach to teaching a lesson. They also wanted to know about her interaction with children, why the physical environment was so noisy, and what her rationale was for making decisions. Each teacher's questions tended to highlight that teacher's philosophy, teaching style, and educational beliefs. Collectively, their questions indicated the difficulty they had understanding and interpreting the Boston teacher and her classroom, difficulty apparently caused by differences between the expectations and environment of the TPWS teachers and those of the Boston teacher. Whereas the participants in our viewing sessions taught in a mid-sized midwest city or in upper middle-class suburban communities, the Boston teacher taught in a larger Eastern setting in which 80% of the students in her class were working-class Indian-Americans. In addition, their familiarity with issues of the mid-eighties may have given the TPWS teachers a different perspective from that of the Boston teacher who was videotaped in the early seventies. In order to look at both sets of teachers' comments, I've placed similar questions asked about class setting on parallel charts:

	Experienced Teachers
Mr. Fairley:	"Why didn't teacher close the door when the students in the hall were making noise?

	Beginning Teachers
B.T. #3:	"Why didn't she close the door to the hallway?
B.T. #2:	"Was there a door for teacher to close to cut down on disturbance? Why not?

Both sets of teachers asked questions about the missing door. (The door of the Boston teacher's room was missing due to summer remodeling. This tape was done on the third day of September and work was still in progress.) The teacher's attention was brought to the absence of the classroom door by the noise created when older children could be heard moving, noisily, through the hall. (On the tape, the Boston teacher stopped her reading group and waited for the children to pass. After waiting a reasonable time for the noise to subside, she got up and asked the children in the hall to quiet down.) One of the beginning teachers intuitively sensed that there may not have been a door to close.

The experienced teachers asked additional questions, attempting to get further information about the setting in order to understand more about the problems of this teacher:

Experienced Teachers

Mrs. Tobin: "Who is talking (in her group or in the classroom)?"

Mrs. Gates: "Was this an open school with a few walls?"

Mrs. Gates: "What time of day was this?"

Mrs. Gates: "Was this an inner-city school?"

Mrs. Smith: "Was this a K-6 School?"

Mrs. Smith: "Why were there larger children at this end of the building?"

A second set of questions was formulated on how this teacher organized and taught reading groups. While in groups children often talked without taking turns and spoke as ideas occurred to them. The children doing seatwork had difficulty settling down and could be heard. The Boston teacher was perceived as taking time from the reading group to remind children of their tasks. She had few of the instructional techniques that the TPWS teachers felt were motivational for starting a lesson. Looking first at the experienced teachers, we find the following observations about their Strategies and Readiness:

Experienced Teachers

Mrs. Tobin: "How long have the children been in school?"

Mrs. Smith: "Couldn't she offer a more stimulating lesson for beginning readers? Where's the motivation?

Mrs. Smith: "How familiar is the class with the routine of groups and lessons?"

Mrs. Gates: "What was the pre-school and kindergarten training for these children?"

Mrs. Gates: "What was the purpose of the lesson?"

The questions asked by both sets of teachers on strategies and readiness reflected their knowledge of ways children are usually able to perform in early September. Mrs. Tobin's question is an inquiry establishing the time of the year. Mrs. Smith's question might be a criticism of this teacher's instructional strategies.

As we look at the beginning teachers' questions, they appear similar to those of the experienced teachers, but fewer questions were asked by the beginners. One beginning teacher asked a question that explored further the amount of previous exposure children had to reading. Another had a question about the goal of the lesson.

Beginning Teachers

B.T. #2: "What was the amount of exposure children had prior to this lesson in reading/listening to books?"

B.T. #4: "What is the central goal of the lesson?"

Again, experienced teachers continued to probe for answers regarding children's preparedness and understanding of the purpose of the lesson. Perhaps novice teachers haven't gained enough experience to look critically at teaching strategies or perhaps their questioning strategies need time to develop. Their questions might also reveal what experience and what insight beginning teachers need more time to develop.

In the area of classroom organization and management, experienced teachers seemed to prize routine and rules, a fact demonstrated by the following comments:

Experienced Teachers

Mrs. Smith: "How long would it take her to establish a routine and behavioral expectations for the group? Weeks?"

Mrs. Smith: "Do all the children in the classroom notice the voice of the teacher?"

Mr. Fairley: "Where was the (disruptive) student's voice coming from?"

Mrs. Meijer: "How does the teacher teach students the rules of the classroom?"

Mrs. Meijer: "How do the students learn to live according to the rules?"

Beginning teachers wanted to know about the children in the class and stressed the need for a smooth transition. They had management concerns as well and even thought of alternative ways to solve some of the problems that had arisen.

B.T. #2: "How can we get from a smooth transition to a smooth lesson?"

B.T. #4: "What are the other children in the class doing?"

B.T. #4: "What are the teacher's main management techniques?"

B.T. #2: "Could the teacher change the time the students read so that there would be no distractions from kids in the hall?"

Both sets of teachers prepared questions that inquired about organization and management. However, they asked these questions from different perspectives. These are the areas of concern that their questions revealed:

Experienced Teachers

1. Establishing rules and routines.
2. Establishing a purpose for reading.
3. Preparation for stimulating lessons.
4. An organized and quiet physical environment.

Beginning Teachers:

1. Children not having enough time to get acquainted with books.
2. Children's need to develop listening skills.

3. Concern for management problems based on lack of smooth transition and time of lesson.

The experienced and the beginning teacher groups seemed to be closer in their comments regarding children. Comparing the two groups, we find these questions:

Experienced Teachers

Mrs. Gates: How did the children learn to read so well?

Mrs. Gates: What was the pre-K-K training training for these children?

Beginning Teachers

B.T. #2: How close is Raymond? (Teacher spoke to Raymond several times. A voice can be heard reading loudly, but child is unseen.)

B.T. #4: Would the children continue to focus without the teacher? (Viewers observed that the reading group continued after the teacher went to the hall to quiet other noisy classes.)

Mrs. Tobin: How did children learn to 'read' so well by beginning of first grade? Was there much readiness before first grade?

Two experienced teachers noticed that first graders were reading from their basals during the first week of school. They wanted more information on the children's previous exposure to reading. Although these two teachers found first grade reading to be a positive aspect of the Boston teacher's practice, only Mrs. Gates described other areas of her practice in a positive way.

As we compare questions asked by the two groups, we find that experienced teachers viewed control as a strong issue. Beginning teachers seemed to look to better management of the setting and better operation of the institution to improve the classroom climate.

A Second Closer Look

Problems and Challenges

On the agenda of an elementary teacher at any given moment is: concern about making "right decisions" in presenting academic material, sound methodology, awareness of multiple and complex social-emotional needs of children, and personal satisfaction in his/her setting. The questions posed by both sets of teachers appear to be based on these agendas, as well as on their unique conceptions of a model classroom environment. This was evident as we participated in group discussion after each showing.

A primary concern for both sets of teachers was the level of noise coming from the hall, which interrupted the lesson and made it difficult to concentrate on teaching or learning. After a repeat showing of this segment, some of the earlier questions were answered; however, the concerns about why such a high level of noise was present in the classroom still needed to be addressed.

During our second sessions, an additional segment of tape was presented prior to a reshowing of this first segment. This was done because both sets of teachers had expressed concern about being asked to form generalizations about the classroom as a whole after seeing only a small part of its school day. They requested the additional tape in order to have a broader perspective upon which to evaluate the Boston teacher and her classroom. They wanted to see how the teacher and the children handled classroom life during different periods of the day. They were particularly interested in seeing the transitional period just prior to the beginning of the reading group. Because both sets of teachers commented upon the unfairness of evaluating the Boston teacher on the basis of so little observation, in our second and third meetings we responded to their request for more information by adding both a math lesson and the transition period preceding the children's movement to the reading table. As we viewed this segment during our second meeting, teachers were asked to observe, review and test their first recorded comments. They were also asked to look for occurrences that they might have missed during the first viewing.

The noise level in the classroom continued to be a central topic of writing and discussion. Both sets of teachers felt that this noise was distracting for the teacher and for the children. Their comments following the second viewing included:

> There'd be no way I would have continued talking to my students and trying to have them focus in on me while all that noise was doing on.
>
> No one appears to be attending until she asks them to close books. Raymond still needs much direction and appears to be unsure of expectations.

One experienced teacher questioned the Boston teacher's discipline methods, viewing them as lenient and interfering with learning. She said:

> I wrote in my notes, 'Directions given many times, no consequences for noncompliance.' She did not seem--it didn't make any difference to her how many times she had to talk to

> the same person about the same thing. There were no consequences, just her voice.

Such comments clearly illustrated the difference between her values and those of the Boston teacher regarding expectations for children's behavior and about the teacher's role in requiring compliance with rules.

The Boston teacher's way of conducting her class was different from that of most of our teachers. Looking over what was written, we find that both beginning and experienced teachers expressed concern over many of the Boston teacher's classroom practices. Only one experienced teacher viewed her approach as a positive influence in helping children to learn and develop independence. However, this teacher also expressed concern for behavior problems she saw displayed during the reading group's lesson. Other experienced teachers were critical of her failure to establish routine and teacher-centered control, her unclear rules, and her lackluster method of conducting lessons. Beginning teachers expressed more concern over the Boston teacher's instructional style, personality, and motivational techniques as they directly related to the children.

Very little attention was paid by either group to the children's background, the time of year, the teacher's experience with the group while they were kindergarteners, and the fact that both the teacher and the children seemed to be quite comfortable with their way of managing. Only scant, and maybe incredulous notice, was paid to the fact that, as the school year began, these five children were readers, another child could be heard reading aloud in the background, and other children were doing independent written seatwork.

As we search for factors that might offer an alternative view of the Boston teacher, one that suggests she might actually have been quite good at what she did, we look once again at what Mrs. Gates wrote as she attempted to present a more positive view:

> Well, I was looking at it in terms of two things, and it seemed to be a good transition between the groups . . . (the) teacher (expected) that the children know what type of behavior was expected . . . who was going to read, who would work independently, and then she began the lesson.

Mrs. Gates commented further:

> It seems as if the children are expected to work independently while the teacher works with small groups. For small children to have to work independently . . . is very hard to learn. I think the teacher did a good job of stressing that the fact children must learn . . . and (know) what was expected of them.

Perhaps Mrs. Gates saw the Boston teacher's method as one in which children were expected to act in a given way, but also as one which allowed them time to learn and understand how to behave in this manner. She may have seen the teacher as actively guiding children toward greater responsibility for self-discipline and involvement in their learning. Her support of the teacher may be viewed from the perspective of a statement made by Gertrude Stein about children. Stein said, "Everyone, when they are young, has a little bit of genius, that is, they really do listen. They can listen and talk at the same time." Could Mrs. Gates have felt that, even though the room was not the traditionally quiet classroom, a lot of learning had taken place in this setting?

The beginning teachers did not address the issue of independence in children. Perhaps they did not see it as an issue, or simply perhaps they simply concurred with the experienced teachers' emphasis upon order.

Final Session: How Did First Impressions Change?

With each successive session, our discussions had pointed up the need to broaden the group's understanding of the Boston teacher's classroom. Thus, the first meeting's discussion prompted requests to see film of the transitional period that occurred just prior to the reading group. Similarly, after seeing this, the teachers felt a need to view the Boston teacher's conduct of her math group.

All of these sessions that we viewed--reading, transition, and math--occurred during the beginning of the school year. By the fourth discussion session, we had expanded the scenes to include a reading group that had taken place much later in the year. Thus, in addition to providing views of the class across content areas, the teachers were also given a view of the Boston classroom across time.

In our final meeting we were anxious to see how TPWS teachers viewed the Boston teacher after three sessions, which had included the additional taped segments of math class and class transition as well as a reshowing of the original tape of the reading group. Had their thinking changed as they learned more about the Boston teacher or had we only given them more information that supported their first impressions? Were there greater differences between beginning teachers and experienced teachers? Were there still significant differences between the various experienced teachers' reactions or had the gap between them been closed? These questions guided my review of the written accounts of this meeting.

Among Experienced Teachers

After viewing the video segments, each participant described in writing his or her final view of the Boston teacher. I examined Mr. Fairley's response first, since he had consistently written comments that were critical of the Boston's teacher's instructional style. He now wrote: "Teacher seems more at ease. The children seem much more interested in their work. There are still many unanswered questions."

These statements do indicate a change from Mr. Fairley's earlier comments that "Teacher did not seem to be able to reduce the number of distractions. No feeling of dynamic interaction. I was bored watching the lesson! Were the students?" Even with "many unanswered questions," there has been a decided shift to a more positive attitude toward the Boston teacher's classroom strategies.

The second TWPS teacher I reviewed was Mrs. Tobin, who had also differed with the Boston teacher's way of conducting lessons. In the final session, she wrote: "Yes . . . she seems more comfortable with her students, not as rigid and uptight. She seems more student-oriented rather than (concerned about) how she's going to come through on the video. More giving of herself and her ideas to her students."

In looking for changes in Mrs. Tobin's thinking, I went back to our second meeting and examined what she'd written at that time:

> Kids get distracted at all the noise. Teacher's personality appears to be the type that some noise and inattention do not bother. Teacher's personality seems to have changed when she presented the math. She seems more prepared to teach this lesson; therefore her enthusiasm was catching . . . children seem quite motivated.

Mrs. Tobin's later writing indicated that she placed a high priority on lessons being highly motivating and on the teacher's being at ease with children. This was also a change in how Mrs. Tobin first viewed the teacher.

As I turned to Mrs. Smith, the third experienced teacher, I wanted to learn whether her attitude toward the Boston teacher had changed in a similar way. Mrs. Smith wrote: "Yes! I was so pleased to be able to watch her in such a positive motivating way. Very different teaching style from most of the tape. I really needed to see more to make up my mind completely. But the teaching styles do seem different on each tape."

In contrast, how had Mrs. Smith evaluated the Boston teacher after our second session? This is what she wrote then:

> Teacher giving directions for transition between activities--sounds like recess outside--many other noises. No one appears to be attending until she asks them to close their books. I think once the children learn the routine of the classroom, the teacher will have a much smoother lesson with fewer interruptions and more time to devote to the lesson itself.
>
> Big difference between math lesson and reading lesson! More motivation, more student involvement. We should use them as much as possible for more effective teaching. The teacher appeared better prepared and more motivated herself. Hurray--She's trying crowd control!

Not only did Mrs. Smith change her opinion of the Boston teacher's style but she also found an aspect of her teaching that she approved and sanctioned. Still, there was some hesitancy in complete acceptance, as demonstrated by Mrs. Smith's remark on needing to see more. I wondered if she needed to see more to check on whether the first aspect of the teacher's style was her true style or if the later teaching was a more accurate demonstration.

Two of the experienced teachers were unable to attend our last session; therefore, we do not have their final observations as part of our study.

What did they look for?

In summarizing the three experienced teachers' observations on these two occasions and noting how they changed their thinking, I drew some conclusions. The experienced teachers were looking for:

1. Lessons that were highly motivating and interesting for children.
2. A teacher who felt very comfortable with children.
3. Positive interactions between teacher and children.
4. A set of rules and established routine to cut down on distractions.

A Look at Beginning Teachers

In our earlier session, the beginning teachers differed from the experienced teachers in that they tended to look at how children themselves were affected by the Boston's teachers classroom management.

Taking a look at what B.T. #3 had to say during our final meeting, we see how her impressions had changed:

> I'm not sure yet - I wish I could have seen the introduction to this reading group. The group did seem quieter this time and more focused on their teacher. However, she seemed to be doing more "lecturing" than discussing. I would like to see her with a discussion going on . . . and managing the rest of the group. I was definitely left with a more positive impression.

How did this written account differ from her earlier one? During the second session she had written:

> The problem is management. She didn't have their attention. She needed to have their attention to focus everyone on one thing. I did hear a better set of directions this time - though group didn't have ideal conditions for listening and focusing. Now I'm wondering if the group was having as much trouble focusing as I was."

B.T. #3 placed strong emphasis on the need for children to focus, on teacher control, and on a total group approach in both sets of her writings. I did not see the child-centered approach that we glimpsed in earlier remarks by beginning teachers.

Beginning Teacher #4, writing on how her impressions had changed, commented:

> Yes. The teacher seems to be more relaxed and at ease with the children. She seems much more enthusiastic about the reading that has just taken place, encouraging children to comment on it and helping them to understand it. She seems to be more tolerant of the children working at their desks and of the questions that they are coming to her with.

I approached the notes of the last beginning teacher, B.T. #2, curious to learn which of the two previous teachers she most resembled--the one who sees a teacher as the central figure in the classroom or the one who feels that a comfortable learning environment is more important. Here are her final impressions:

> Yes. My impressions have changed--positively. The teacher seemed more at ease and eager to teach. She frequently gave the students positive reinforcement and she personalized her conversation with them. Teacher was motivated and thus passed this on to her students.

B.T. #2, like B.T. #4, placed high value on the teacher's personal involvement in teaching and on the importance of that involvement as a positive motivation for learning.

In reviewing how beginning teachers looked at the Boston teacher, we do not find clear agreement on what factors they considered most important. However, all three did want--

1. The teacher to be be more involved in what she was teaching.
2. The teacher to present highly motivating lessons.

During our last meeting there seemed to be some divergence in group response to the Boston teacher. B.T. #3 concentrated upon the need for children to focus upon the a teacher as a center of learning, whereas B.T. #4 and B.T. #2 seemed less concerned with this factor. Perhaps this can be accounted for by the differing personalities, training, and classroom experience of the beginning teachers.

Looking For Common Issues Of Practice

After beginning and experienced teachers had completed viewing sessions, discussions, and writing on ways of seeing the Boston teacher, both sets were asked to reflect upon common issues of practice. Until this time they had examined the problems and challenges facing the Boston teacher primarily in relationship to her handling of classroom issues. Now they were asked to think about these challenges in terms of how they might relate them to their own practice. Might the issues that came up during meetings have implications for their teaching? The Boston study had been done during the early seventies. Had more than a decade of educational change made a real difference in teachers' ways of seeing?

Among experienced teachers' comparisons of the similarities and differences between their practice and that of the Boston teacher, we find Mr. Fairley's remark that "Like the teacher in the study, I too have days that are better than other days . . . Trying to teach course objectives while dealing with children with human feelings and needs can be a difficult task. Every day I confront the problems and issues that this teacher meets in her classroom."

Such comments, seen from the vantage point of Mr. Fairley's earlier writings, demonstrated an introspective mood and a change in thinking. All of his comments had consistently reflected his personal belief in the need for highly-involved teachers and well-defined standards of teaching. However, with increased observation and greater insight into what the Boston teacher was trying to accomplish, he had modified some of his first impressions and had begun looking at the broader issues of teaching. For example, he began to examine the belief that a teacher must always be "up" to the task of teaching, the notion that, no matter what the difficulties, a teacher must demonstrate "100% involvement and showcase readiness" at all times. Discussing the possible implications of this, Mr. Fairley wrote: "I wonder how often evaluations of teachers are made during a time period that shows them negatively. Can an accurate and objective evaluation take place after just a few short visits?"

The later writing of Mrs. Tobin shows a similar development in perspective. She wrote: "It's hard to evaluate a person by taking small chunks of lessons to see if that person is doing an effective job in the classroom. I run my classroom management quite differently, but was very comfortable with the way this teacher handled her children . . . she likes children and cares about them."

Mrs. Tobin also pointed out the difficulty of fully understanding a particular classroom and a particular teacher on the basis of only a few short viewings. Two key issues for Mrs. Tobin had always been the teacher's classroom management and her relationship with the children. In her later writing, after she was able to see that the Boston teacher addressed these issues, she found that the two of them had similarities in teaching style, although they did not address these issues in the same way.

Mrs. Smith made these comments: "Classroom management and preventive teaching are important to me. I want my children to know their expectations and mine and be able to function efficiently in our room. Today (the Boston teacher's) room ran smoothly. The children appeared responsible and worked efficiently." Mrs. Smith's primary concern was that the children develop personal responsibility for learning. She focused on classroom efficiency and the development in children of a clear understanding of what was expected of them. After several viewings, some of

Mrs. Smith's concerns had been addressed, but she needed more time before she could relate the Boston teacher's situation to her own.

As we review the responses of experienced teachers, we find few comments on children's academic progress. This may be due to the way our questions were formed or perhaps it results from the fact that teachers were more concerned with the "how" than they were with the "what" of teaching. In any event, as we continued our viewings of the Boston teacher, the elements that were seen as most significant were the children's responsiveness, their growth in responsibility, and their increased participation in discussion.

Beginning teachers, in their earlier writings, had examined the teacher's interaction with the children very closely. In their final comments, they too demonstrated an expanded vision.

Beginning Teacher #3 indicated that she spent some time thinking about what really is expected of teachers. She wrote:

> After concluding discussions, I can see some things in this classroom that all teachers must face. Setting the norms for a group of active children is a challenge. In the final tape there has been the progress we all hoped to see midway through the year. We all have to learn to be flexible and willing to try new ways of dealing with the many interruptions we may have . . . Right now, it seems like there has been an endless amount of activities cutting into my teaching time.

In earlier writings, B.T. #3 had not reached this level of sensitivity regarding the role the Boston teacher had played in her classroom. She seemed to have developed a more objective way of looking at the practice of other teachers.

Beginning Teacher #2, when asked about common issues, stated: "I'm not very sure what this question really means. But I have four and five-year-olds who are even younger than the children this teacher has. So I feel that both she and I are confronted with the same problems. Without really understanding the question then, B.T. #2 was able to relate to the Boston teacher because of her experience with a common age group.

Beginning Teacher #4 expressed similar empathy when she wrote: "I too am teaching first grade reading groups. I realize how important it is to work with a small group while having the rest of the class on tasks at the same time. Motivating children to want to read is important and the teacher's attitude is vital to the success of the lesson. I too must keep this importance in mind." B.T. #4 appears to mean by this statement, that it is the teacher's responsibility to move children to learn.

B.T. #2 and B.T. #4 provided the first comments by either set of teachers on how a teacher's attitudes affect children's ability to learn. In addition, B.T. #4 identified with the challenge to the teacher of addressing the needs of individual children while still attending to the whole group.

In summary, we find that all of the TPWS teachers were able to find issues of common concern connecting their teaching practice to that of the Boston teacher. These issues include:

1) Meeting the individual needs of children while maintaining an optimal level of instruction.
2) Projecting an attitude of real concern for children.
3) Presenting expectations clearly so that children are led to become more responsible.

In addition, the beginning teachers related to these issues:

1) The challenge of setting norms and of maintaining flexibility while dealing with interruptions.

2) Developing a clear understanding of children's age/grade development and needs.

3) Balancing the curriculum to best meet the needs of individuals, small groups, and the whole class.

An analysis of the issues focused upon by both experienced and beginning teachers showed that the early establishment of norms and expectations was seen as important by both groups. Beginning teachers, however, emphasized the need for flexibility in this regard. Both groups stressed the delicate balance between meeting objectives and attending to the diverse needs within the classroom. One experienced teacher emphasized the importance of the teacher's exhibiting a caring attitude toward children. Finally, one beginning teacher felt it was vital that teachers are better prepared to interact with young children.

SECTION THREE: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Chapter 8

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter begins by reviewing patterns of teachers' interests and concerns as revealed in the focused group interviews reported on in the last chapter. Then the chapter continues by reviewing the major findings of the whole study regarding teachers' practical habits of attention and interpretive sensemaking while teaching.

Fredrick Erickson

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Significance of Themes from the Focused Group Interviews

It was apparent from the teachers' comments while viewing a tape of a teacher and a set of students they had never seen before that especially the experienced teachers wanted more information in order to make sense of what they were seeing on the television screen. They were asking for wider frames of reference in order to make connections between the particular behavioral details that could immediately be seen and heard, and a set of larger issues, knowledge of which lay beyond the screen and beyond the moment. Among these concerns were more information regarding the nature of the institutional setting, the community background of the students, the teachers' strategies in dealing with a whole year's worth of curriculum, and the teacher's pedagogical commitments--her working philosophy of teaching.

These concerns were spontaneously expressed by the teachers during the open-ended discussions of the video viewing session. It is significant that the experienced teachers especially wanted information beyond what could be heard and seen on the screen. This suggests that they were used to operating more comprehensibly in making sense than were the beginning teachers.

The specific kinds of information desired by the experienced teachers are also significant, in that they confirm, in broad strokes at least, some of the researcher's initial guesses about patterns in the teachers' ways of seeing and making sense. Those first hunches by the researchers appeared in the earliest of the project's progress reports. Let us review the teachers' questions that arose in viewing sessions at the end of the study and then review the researchers' initial hunches at the beginning of the study.

In the viewing sessions the teachers wanted to know about the nature of the school and community: "Is this an inner city or a suburban school?" "Is this an open building? (i.e. do the classrooms not have walls)." There were a number of questions regarding time in the school year and in the children's school lives: "What time of year is this lesson?" "How long have the children been in school?" "How familiar is the class with the routines of groups and lessons?" "What was the pre-school and kindergarten training for these children?"

The teachers also wanted to know about the working philosophy of the teacher they were seeing on the screen. They freely expressed their own; especially the axiom that classroom orderliness must precede learning--the children must sit still and not talk before profitable instruction and learning could take place. Even Mr. Fairley expressed this when watching the first tape of teaching that was shown, yet he was the teacher who seemed most to have valued students' curiosity and independent learning. Various children could be seen around the room working on their own--a high value for Mr. Fairley. Yet the ambient noise level concerned him as much as it did the other experienced and beginning teachers.

All but one of the teachers expressed much concern in the initial viewing session with issues of noise level and management.

(The exception was Mrs. Gates, who by coincidence had studied other tapes of the Boston teacher in a graduate course at the university the previous summer and who through that experience had become convinced that there was much more to be seen on classroom videotapes than could be apprehended at first glance. She had also become convinced, through study, that the Boston teacher was extremely effective, albeit in slightly nonstandard ways). Except for Mrs. Gates, the concerns over what was seen as disorderliness were so central for the teachers that they did not notice some pedagogically crucial evidence that was there to be seen and heard on the videotape--this was the first day the children had had a reading lesson in first grade, the children had been with this teacher the year before as kindergartners since it was a K-1 split classroom, and the children on the screen were reading aloud fluently and asking and answering comprehension questions. The students could already read, and very well indeed for beginning first graders! Presumably the teacher had taught them to read last year and so her instruction could not have been nearly so ineffective as the teachers assumed at first viewing. Yet during the first viewing session all the teachers but one failed to notice how well the children were reading.

The teachers, beginning and experienced alike, seemed to be looking at the videotape through a set of beliefs. Among them was the assumption that the room was too noisy and disorderly for learning to be taking place. When tapes from much later in the year were shown in which instruction proceeded much more smoothly than on the first day of reading instruction for the year, most of the teachers still complained about the noise level in the room. Learning that 80% of the students in the room were working class Italian-American and that such levels of ambient noise were usual for them, at least with this teacher, made no apparent difference in the normative frame of the teachers' ways of seeing. They still remarked on the noise and questioned whether learning could take place under such conditions.

Time and regional/ethnic professional culture may have influenced this. The videotapes were made in the mid 1970's when "open classrooms" and inquiry oriented instruction were still in fashion, although that trend was waning as "teacher-proof curricula" and methods of "direct instruction" were being introduced. The teachers were watching in the mid-1980's, by which time the beliefs in direct instruction as a route toward teacher effectiveness had become well entrenched in their school districts.

This was also the Midwest, and the tapes were from the urban Northeast. The entire teaching experience of the teachers had been in small cities and suburbs in the Midwest where there were no large concentrations of working-class Italian-Americans. There were no more open classrooms. Thus the Midwestern teachers' ways of seeing seem to have been powerfully influenced by the lenses of culture and of their situation in recent educational history. (It is not coincidental that the fieldnotes of the project coordinator's first day in one of the suburban teachers' rooms contain the comment, "It's so quiet in here, I can't believe it! That makes me nervous." The researcher had observed in the

Boston teacher's classroom for two years and had adapted to the noise level there. He was finding a Midwestern suburban classroom remarkable for its stillness in sound and in children's body motion.)

In sum, not only did the teachers want much more information about time of year and about particular traits of children, they also demonstrated the influence of their own pedagogical commitments in what they noticed and overlooked on the tapes. This is consistent with generalizations reported in the project's first and second progress reports. Here are quotations from the second of those reports, submitted in September of 1982 after a full year's observation with the suburban teachers had been completed:

1. It seems that the two experienced teachers see globally at the beginning of the year and more specifically later in the year.
2. It seems that the two experienced teachers see connections rather than isolated phenomena.
3. It seems that the two experienced teachers attend to what they think they need to see and hear at any given moment.
4. It seems that what the two experienced teachers think they need to see is often a situation that calls for their decision and action; in these "problem" situations it is the discrepant phenomenon that becomes figure while the more normal phenomena are taken as ground, and often go unnoticed.

These initial hunches about ways of seeing changed a bit as the study progressed. The first hunch was revised in later reports. It appeared that teachers attended to different kinds of phenomena more than to others at different times of the school year, and so time of year was importantly related to ways of seeing. Yet the experienced teachers were able to see very globally and very specifically at any point in the year--this is how they made connections, by reading off a specific behavioral cue interpretively against their background of recollections and understandings.

The fourth assertion was also modified somewhat later in the research. It became apparent that at some times, some of the teachers (notably Mrs. Smith, Mrs. Gates, and Mr. Fairley) watched for sheer enjoyment and appreciation as some students began to "fly," as Mrs. Smith put it--as they began to do extremely able academic work with enthusiasm and relish. This did not require decision or intervention on the part of the teacher. But those moments of relatively detached watching for the sheer pleasure of it were rare. More usually the teachers seemed to concentrate on attending within a triage press on decision and action.

What Teachers See: A Summary

We have claimed that the experienced teachers see very specifically and very globally simultaneously. During the study the teachers were observed attending to a very wide range of specific phenomena across an even wider range of what is available potentially as seeable and hearable. Let us consider first the range of potential objects of attention and then consider a list of actual objects of teachers' attention, a list that illustrates the range of what teachers actually attend to while they teach.

The range of potential objects of a teacher's attention includes events and relationships outside the classroom as well as inside it. Among these outside-the-classroom relationships are those with the principal and with other teachers in the building, as interaction occurs in the teachers' lounge, in faculty meetings, at parties, and in one-on-one encounters. Also outside the classroom is the playground, where the teacher watches students from his or her own classroom. Within the classroom there are various classes of potential objects of attention: (1) physical objects that contribute to constituting the setting (e.g., lights, radiator, student chairs and tables), (2) overall curriculum and its materials (e.g. sequences of study, books, workbooks), (3) overall social management (e.g., ambient noise levels, and seating, postural, kinesic, and gaze-direction arrangements of children in various activities), (4) particular instructional activities (e.g., math lesson, free reading time), particular groupings of children (e.g., reading group, the girls who sit together at snack time, the children at the science experiment table), and (5) particular children (their academic and social-emotional performance, interpreted as displaying the knowledge and skills they have mastered and the conceptual confusions and limits on knowldge, skill, interests, and patience according to which they can be characterized pedagogically for purposes of instructional intervention, and as well, for purposes of simply figuring out how to live with them until the end of the day or the end of the year).

Here is a list that illustrates the range of phenomena that the teachers who were studied actually attended to in split-second glances and listenings while teaching. From such momentary foci of attention came remembered behavioral snapshots that were discussed in interviews.

> pencilled-in answer on a math workbook page, read upside down as teacher walks past front of child's desk
>
> set of students' index fingers of right hands pointing to title of story on page of basal reader
>
> almost whole set of eyes of all students in the classroom (but for one who is not looking) in the moment just before the teacher explains how to complete a worksheet
>
> time at the moment, on the face of the classroom clock mounted on the wall
>
> ambient noise level and kinesic (body motion) activity level of three children completing a puzzle sitting on the floor in the corner of the room by the bookshelf where the free reading books are kept
>
> slight hesitation at mid-clause in a student's speech and question-intonation at the end of the clause as the child answers a recitation question from the teacher
>
> expression of intense concentration on the face of a student sitting at her desk while working on a writing assignment
>
> answer to question by teacher that reveals special understanding/misunderstanding by a student
>
> set of ratings behind a student's name on a classroom citizenship chart prominently displayed on the wall
>
> expression of grief on a boy's face as teacher tells class that its pet hamster died over the weekend
>
> immobilized pencil poised on worksheet paper, held in the hand of a child who is sitting at her desk at a time when she is supposed to be completing the worksheet
>
> child falling off a chair, having tipped it over backwards
>
> child falling off a chair by sliding off it sideways
>
> bell signaling end of recess
>
> bee sting on child's forearm
>
> bruise on child's upper arm
>
> child seen standing alone on the playground

child's loose tooth

contents of a student's lunch box

new Cabbage Patch doll

What are the meanings of these phenomena that teachers actually attended to? The only meaning identified in the list was that for the answer to the teacher question that revealed special understanding/misunderstanding by the child. That was a quasi-hypothetical instance, used as an illustrative placeholder for many particular cases of answers by students that were especially revealing to the teacher. All the other objects of attention could have been interpreted as meaning various things, depending upon the point of view of the teacher. Is the child whose pencil is immobilized on the page daydreaming or thinking carefully about the next answer to be written on the worksheet? Are all the children whose fingers are pointing to the title of the story in the reading book actually attending to that title? Was the child who hesitated and used question intonation at the end of a spoken answer to the teacher's question guessing, partially unsure of the answer, or sure of the answer but saying it in a statistically infrequent way (i.e. a "marked" way) for some other reason?

What of the expression of grief on the boy's face as the death of the classroom hamster is being reported? This is an example that came from Mrs. Smith's classroom at the beginning of Monday morning in the time soon after the Christmas holidays. The boy's name was Ethan. In making interpretive sense of his facial expression Mrs. Smith put more than one thing together. She knew that not only had the hamster died over the weekend but that

Ethan's grandmother had died about a week before and this was the first death of a relative he had confronted. She had made a connection--hamster--Ethan's face--Ethan's grandmother. She also made another kind of connection, for this was not just any boy's face looking sad, this was Ethan's face. The teacher recalled instances of Ethan's reactions to classroom situations of disappointment for him during the previous months of school. Sometimes his emotions had flooded out suddenly when he became disappointed.

The teacher was making interpretive sense by making connections across diverse phenomena, and was doing so for the purpose of deciding how to take action. In an informal interview on the playground that morning she said she had noticed the boy's expression just as she was announcing the death of the hamster. She then watched the boy during the next moments as she said a few words about how we feel when people as well as pets leave us for various reasons, including death. It seemed that the boy was still very sad but was not flooding out, judging from his facial expression. Because of that the teacher opened the topic up for class discussion. Had anyone had a pet that had died? Some children had. How did they feel? Someone volunteered an account of how she felt when an older sister left for college. Another child told how he felt when an uncle died. The teacher told of her feelings in similar situations.

Throughout her own discourse on loss and grief, and during the children's talk about it, the teacher watched Ethan. If it seemed to be too much for him she could close the discussion and begin to explain the work assignments for the day. Since his face kept telling her it didn't seem to be too much she let the conversation go on a while.

The teacher had wanted Ethan to hear that the emotions of grief were allowable. Noticing his face and making the connections between the death of the hamster and his family situation provided the teacher the opportunity to conduct a spontaneous lesson on grieving. The teacher's aim was the benefit of the class as a whole, but she also had Ethan's benefit especially in mind. She watched him carefully for the rest of the day.

Classroom happenings vary in scale, in duration, in frequency of occurence, and in the comprehensiveness of the different semantic cues that must be connected in order to make sense of the happening. So far we have been considering instances of classroom phenomena that can be noticed in a moment. Other phenomena can only be apprehended as they unfold slowly and recurrently over long strips of time. An example is the development of an individual student's letter formation skills in cursive writing, as evidenced in instances of the child's written work across many months. Still other phenomena occur over the space of a few hours. Ethan's face for the rest of the school day is one such case. Another case, also from Mrs. Smith's classroom, was the swelling of a child's arm after being stung by a bee. The teacher watched the arm all day because she knew the child's medical status report said that she was allergic to bee stings.

Attention by the teacher to any of those potentially available objects of attention varied in kind according to the nature of the object toward which attention was directed. The teachers attended to the acquisition of cursive writing very differently from the way they attended to a momentary rise in classroom noise level or to the waxing and waning of a swelling from a bee sting. These objects of attention differ in kind not only because of their physical form but because they evoke different kinds of responsibility for decision and action by the teacher. Thus, for example, the situation of attending to the evolution of a child's cursive writing skills over time, or to mastery of multiplication tables, does not require the same sort of decision-making and data collection as does the situation of watching a child who has just been stung by a bee. In the latter case the teacher may have to decide quickly to take the child to a nurse or to call in the school principal and the child's parents. Consequently the difference in kind of attention is not simply a function of the difference in time scale between the development of penmanship and the swelling of a child's arm. Legal and ethical issues of responsibility are much more salient in the latter case, although they are not entirely absent in the former.

We have seen in the case study of Mrs. Meijer that referring a child for special education testing is another situation in which the consequences of attention and decision have legal and fiscal ramifications. Mrs. Meijer paid special attention to potentially referrable children over a time span comparable to that necessary to observe the acquisition of cursive writing skills. With special education referral in mind, however, she attended to a much wider range of phenomena than had she been watching penmanship--many differing instances of the children's academic and social performance across a variety of scenes and events in the school day. The result of all that observation and interpretation by making connections across many different kinds of phenomena was the referral of one child, Craig.

Another important feature of observation by the teachers is that it is highly situation-specific. We have seen this in the example of Ethan's sad face. It was also true of the example of the bee sting, which occurred on the playground during morning recess early in the fall in Mrs. Smith's classroom. Two girls were stung during that recess period. For the rest of the day Mrs. Smith attended mainly to the size of the swelling on one of the children's arms. With the other child the teacher attended more to her facial expression and to the teariness of her eyes than to the swelling itself. The latter of the two girls was seen by the teacher as more easily upset and more anxious about illness. The former of the two girls was the one who had a note on her medical record warning of her allergic sensitivity to bee stings.

The experienced teachers employed ways of seeing that were both very situation-specfic and were also embedded in sets of interpretive connections made across many different kinds and levels of context. The ways of seeing and making sense differed according to the kind of decision and action that the teacher thought was necessary regarding the particular object of attention of the moment.

The teachers' notions of what kinds of decision and action were necessary were related to their pedagogical commitments.

Whether a particular student behavior was seen as a pedagogical problem or opportunity depended upon the teachers' working philosophy of teaching and learning. Many of the examples presented above could be seen in these terms quite differently depending on the frame provided by pedagogical commitments of differing sorts. The immobile pencil on the student's worksheet, for example, might be seen as a salient indicator of a problem requiring action by a teacher who was very concerned that students maintain "time on task" in certain visible ways during seatwork periods. For a teacher who regarded the visible display of effort during seatwork as not very important, or as an unreliable indicator of student's attention and learning, the immobile pencil would be much less salient. It might go entirely unnoticed.

Let us review the main pedagogical commitments of the five experienced teachers we studied. Mrs. Smith, one of the suburban teachers, was very committed to providing empathy with students, to student learning, to quiet orderliness as a precondition for students' academic work, and to hilarity when it was time to have fun. She was the teacher who watched Ethan's face carefully while turning the announcement of the hamster's death into an occasion to support Ethan's grief over the death of his grandmother. Mrs. Smith was also the teacher who said she loved to watch the most academically able students after Christmas as they began to "fly" academically. She reported the most pleasure of all the experienced teachers in nonutilitarian looking--appreciative watching of students who were doing well without particular help from her. She reacted much more strongly to ambient classroom noise than to ambient body motion and student postures and insisted on quiet while work was being done. She believed it was her responsibility to see that students spent much "time on task," and used that term itself. Yet work should alternate with time off task. She liked fun and organized many celebrations in the classroom. She was particularly fond of costume parties (the faculty of the school organized an all school costume day and Mrs. Smith participated in this avidly, devising ingenious costumes for herself and for others). Mrs. Smith was the art coordinator for the building and also the coordinator for use of computers. Her pedagogical commitments were both to work and to play. She wanted to foster academic achievement and students' emotional growth and well being.

Mrs. Meijer, the teacher across the hall from Mrs. Smith, was very much committed to and interested in children's academic performance and interests. She had been an upper-grades teacher before taking on a second-grade class a few years before our study. She was interested in social studies and developed supplementary units on Native Americans of the state. Like Mrs. Smith, Mrs. Meijer believed in quiet as a necessary condition for student learning. She also stressed the importance of students' understanding what was required of them and taking initiative to complete work and do it correctly. Thus a student like Craig, who was both noisy and often off in the wrong places at the wrong times, was an especially salient child in her room. Mrs. Meijer was especially frustrated because her class had not started to "jell" after Christmas, while Mrs. Smith's class across the hall had already begun to "jell."

Mrs. Tobin taught in the urban school system. Many of her students were of low socioeconomic status and of minority race and language background. She believed in order as a precondition to classroom learning. She also believed that the best thing to do for her students was to see to it that they spent time working seriously, using the texts, workbooks, and dittoed worksheets that were available. If they did their work persistently and correctly, benefits in learning would follow. Accordingly she and her aide were especially vigilant about student behavior during seatwork, and she used some behavior modification techniques during reading groups. Students were awarded citizenship ratings and were given cookies and crackers as rewards for effort and accuracy in their classroom work and for good deportment. Mrs. Tobin had some doubts about the new reading series that was being introduced that year. She thought the material in the stories was not at as high a level as that in the previous series. Still, she used the new materials in a thorough way, figuring that with its unit by unit tests the new reading program would benefit the students.

Mrs. Gates also taught in the urban school system. Her school had the highest student turnover rate in the district and many of the students in her class were of low socioeconomic status and of minority racial and language background. She was concerned that such students were often misperceived as having less ability than they actually had. They needed explicit teaching in survival skills and encouragement to try things. If they tried hard under emotionally supportive conditions they could experience success and feel good about themselves. The child's family could help Mrs. Gates with this. She encouraged parents to work with their children. She sent home games and devised other educational activities with which parents and children could be engaged. Mrs. Gates had very mixed feelings about the new reading program, with its unit by unit tests. She felt that the school district, with its extreme emphasis on monitoring students' stepwise acquisition of mandated skills, was not leaving time for enrichment in reading and math, and for the teaching of survival skills such as those of test-taking. Accordingly she devised games, contests, and various self-testing activities by which students could practice working under timed conditions and get quick feedback regarding the accuracy of their work. She didn't value these things in their own right but felt they were necessary for the kinds of children she taught, who needed both procedural skills and a sense of courage when facing test situations. At the same time she provided diverse enrichment activities because she valued the kinds of knowledge and experience not measured by the tests. She did this especially in language arts, an area in which she was more confident as an instructor than in math and science. She worried about the children and about her teaching. Sometimes she felt very tired but she kept trying. She wondered if she was doing right in adding things that "they," the school district, did not emphasize.

Mr. Fairley also taught in the urban district. The two schools in which he was observed had student populations characterized by somewhat fewer minority students and a slightly higher average family income than did the schools where Mrs. Gates and Mrs. Tobin taught. Still, Mr. Fairley's school attendance areas contained pockets of poverty and minority students were a significant presence in his classrooms during both of the school years he was observed. In Year I Mr. Fairley expressed confidence in his approach to teaching, which differed fundamentally from that emphasized in the school district. He believed that his way was both better for children and possible for him to achieve with them, although that took effort and commitment on both their parts. He thought that teachers needed to know their children well. Each summer before school he would write a handwritten letter to each of his new students and try to visit them in their homes. During the year he invited children to his home. His wife was also a teacher and they would sometimes have children stay for the weekend. He sometimes spent time with students outside school during the week so that they and he could come to know each other as people. He wanted to discover the children's interests and he wanted them to know that he had interests and curiosity too and was always learning things. Over the years he had gotten well acquainted with families in the neighborhood, teaching one sibling after another. Families repeatedly requested placement of their next younger children with Mr. Fairley. He believed that academic skills were necessary but that they followed from engagement in work that was interesting and intellectually substantive. He thought it was very important that children develop a love for learning and that teachers believe in their students' capacity and foster their curiosity. The district's skills testing emphasis would have interfered with this, had he let it do so. But his children did well on the tests and so he went ahead teaching in the way he thought was right.

In Year II Mr. Fairley found himself in a new situation. The old school was closed and he followed "his" families to a larger school where most of the students had been reassigned. He was not able to get acquainted with the Year II class during the previous summer, as had been his custom in earlier years. Also Year II was the year the new reading series was being used, with its unit by unit tests. Mr. Fairley had doubts about the level of material in the series. He still thought the whole emphasis of the district on incremental skill acquisition left out the heart of what was truly educative--to provide material worth learning that engaged and stimulated children's interests, taught by a teacher who modeled a love for learning and saw to it that every child tried. But it was a hard year. He used the reading books and worksheets more centrally in his reading instruction than in former years. There were still independent projects and other enrichment activities in the various subject areas. But many of them didn't take off the way they had in previous years. Fewer of the children seemed curious. He had to spend more effort keeping some students from disrupting the others and less effort on enriching the curriculum. The year wasn't as satisfying as previous years had been.

It is apparent that the working philosophies of teaching differed across the five experienced teachers studied. Perhaps the most extrema contrast is that between Mr. Fairley and Mrs. Tobin, with Mrs. Gates and the suburban teachers Smith and Meijer in between. Mrs. Tobin did not seem to question the mandated curriculum while Mr. Fairley, especially in Year I, made it a point in interviews to note that his philosophy of teaching was quite different from that current in the district. Mrs. Gates was ambivalent. She questioned the mandated curriculum yet worried more about being right in doing so than did Mr. Fairley. Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Meijer did not question for the most part the mandated curriculum but they developed many activities on their own and in collaboration with each other.

Each of the teachers was responsible and conscientious by his or her own lights. According to their perspectives they had differing notions of what was a problem, what needed fixing, what could or couldn't be fixed. For Mrs. Tobin the curriculum was not a problem, especially. Management was the important issue and she had found a system that worked for her and her aide. She monitored students carefully to see that they were persisting in their assigned tasks and were doing them correctly. For her the immobile pencil of a child at seatwork was the kind of occasion that one needed to watch for and react to. One needed to watch quite a wide range of children for this, in Mrs. Tobin's opinion. Mr. Fairley and Mrs. Gates sometimes would notice and call to account a student who was holding an immobile pencil when it should have been moving, but they did not do this as consistently as Mrs. Tobin did. Mrs. Gates would be especially vigilant for the immobile pencil during one of the activities she had designed to simulate timed test situations. At other times she would not be so vigilant about that kind of phenomenon. She would be very selective in watching students and only look at those she knew needed to be "reminded" to complete their work.

Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Meijer were often vigilant about the immobile pencils in their rooms. Students in their classrooms generally were doing more academically advanced work than were the children in the urban classrooms and they did it much more quietly. Yet Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Meijer were vigilant. Many of their advanced students did not need so much instruction as did the students from the city, who were less skilled in accomplishing the tasks assigned to them. Mrs. Smith's and Mrs. Meijer's classrooms may have "worked" in part because they could get good results by seeing to it that the children kept at their assigned work. Both suburban teachers had heard of the term "time on task" and used it during interviews in describing children in their rooms. They were especially careful in looking at the students' worksheets, correcting them and getting them back to the students quickly.

Mr. Fairley spent the least time looking at worksheets because he used them the least. He was the teacher most acutely focused on children's talk in discussion as indicating not only their understanding of right answers but their underlying reasoning. If someone asked an interesting question that revealed a novel conception he would extend class discussion along those lines, especially in Year I. In Year II he did that less, focusing more on what students thought than on how they thought. Mrs. Meijer and Mrs. Gates were also interested in children's thinking. Mrs. Meijer seemed to enjoy reasoning with students and she had enjoyed teaching upper grades where that could happen in even more extended ways. Mrs. Gates was concerned that, in the interest of their own academic survival, her students understand the kinds of things the tests were driving at. Her interest in the "how" of children's thinking was thus more pragmatic than Mr. Fairley's may have been, with his deep belief in the value of knowledge and curiosity in their own right.

Probably Mrs. Gates and Mr. Fairley would have paid special attention to the grief on Ethan's face had he been in their rooms, and they might have extended the discussion of feelings about the death of pets and other kinds of separations as did Mrs. Smith. In different ways Smith, Gates, and Fairley seemed to resonate emotionally with their students, while Meijer and Tobin were more detached. It was not that Meijer and Tobin were uninvolved with their students' feelings, it was just that those phenomena were not such a priority and focus of attention as they were for the other teachers. For Mr. Fairley in Year II there appeared to be less emotional resonance with the class than in Year I.

A cautionary note is in order lest these characterizations seem stereotypical. All the teachers were observed noticing and reacting to all the kinds of classroom phenomena we have been discussing. It was not that Mr. Fairley was never concerned about an immobile pencil or that Mrs. Tobin was never concerned about the originality of a student's insight as well as the correctness of it as an answer to a question or that Mrs. Meijer never noticed and resonated with the feelings of her students while Mrs. Smith was constantly awash with sentiment. Rather, the teachers' ways of seeing varied in terms of relative emphasis on the various domains of what was potentially noticeable. Ways of seeing varied as well from situation to situation depending on the immediate exigencies of that situation.

To conclude this discussion, the experienced teachers' ways of seeing involved processing information about kinds of phenomena that were extremely diverse in physical form and in the time scale necessary to perceive them. Particular phenomena were viewed interpretively by making connections of comparison and contrast between the phenomenon at hand and remembered instances of other phenomena. These connections were made from a memory bank, as it were, in which was stored information on individual children and groups of children across the whole school year, as well as information from earlier years of teaching. Time of year was an important influence on what was especially salient for teachers to notice. All these patterns of interpretation seem to have been influenced fundamentally by the pedagogical commitments of the various teachers; their working philosophies of teaching and learning. This led teachers to notice what they thought, consciously or intuitively, they needed to notice.

How Teachers Learn Ways of Seeing

Professional ways of paying attention to classroom events and making sense of them seem to be acquired rather than being innate.

Our data on the process of acquisition are less, both in breadth and in depth, than are our data on the ways of seeing used by experienced teachers. Still a few useful comments on what is acquired and how that happens can be made by way of summary. It seems that the undergraduate interns and beginning teachers saw classroom events in a more fragmentary way than did the experienced teachers. The novices made fewer connections--they did not interpret events of the moment in terms of a sense of the whole year of progress through the curriculum, nor in terms of a backdrop of recollections from previous years. The novices also seemed more tentative in their perceptions and judgments than did the experienced teachers, although by the end of the first year of teaching the beginners expressed more confidence in their perceptions than they had done at the beginning of the year. These generalizations are illustrated by the two examples that follow.

The following example shows differences between experienced teachers and university undergraduates who are intermittent visitors to classrooms. The differences in ways of seeing were revealed in contrasts between observational notes made by undergraduate teacher education students and observational comments made by two experienced teachers while watching a videotape of classroom life. The experienced teachers were Daisy Thomas, the teacher collaborator in the study, and Mrs. Smith (pseudonym), one of the two experienced suburban second-grade teachers studied in 1981-82.

At the university teacher education class--one for students in their second of six terms as teacher education majors, the two experienced teachers discussed a videotape of Steven, the focal child mentioned earlier in this report. The videotape was made on the morning of January 15, 1982. Steven was seated at a table with three other students, doing seatwork and studying for a spelling test. As the videotape of Steven was shown to the university class the teacher education students wrote observational notes, and the experienced teachers also jotted down some notes. Then the experienced teachers discussed what they had noticed. Their comments were audiotaped.

The written comments of the undergraduate students were compared with the spoken comments of the experienced teachers. Both of the experienced teachers were able to note specific details in Steven's behavior at his table and then to extrapolate from this to general comments of children and of teaching. They also discussed strategies for dealing with conspicuous children like Steven, while still dealing with the rest of the class. Although the experienced teachers extrapolated inferentially in discussing Steven, they still noted specific behavioral details of what Steven did, what the other children at his table were doing, and what the teacher was doing. Those details were all considered in relation to one another. In other words, the experienced teachers made connections across different levels of organization in the classroom--individual, group, class as a whole. They also made comparisons beyond that one classroom to last year's class as a whole, to other individuals like Steven they had encountered, to differences in teaching across different buildings in the district, and also across school districts. The experienced teachers repeatedly commented on relationships between what the teacher was doing and what Steven, the focal child, was doing. They discussed various options for working with a student like Steven, and how one's strategies might change across the school year.

In contrast, the written comments of many of the undergraduate teacher education students were either highly inferential (providing little grounding in behavioral evidence) or highly fragmentary (noting specific behaviors of Steven, but not relating these to the group at his table, or to what the teacher was doing). The undergraduate students also did not mention the relationship between what Steven was doing on one morning in mid-January and what had happened earlier and later in the school year. Their accounts of Steven were asocial and ahistorical; they did not situate Steven's behavior in wider contexts across the time and space of real life in that classroom. In one sense this is not surprising, since the students knew nothing of these wider contexts of interpretation. In another sense it is very significant, for the extremely inexperienced teacher education students seemed quite unaware that they needed to employ broader contexts of interpretation in order to make sense of Steven--considering the class and teacher as a whole social system at that point in time and looking at that particular point in time in terms of the overall history of the school year and in terms of Steven's place in that history.

Another example of differences (and similarities) in what an inexperienced and experienced teacher report that they notice comes from a case study of a student teacher that was conducted by Daisy Thomas, teacher collaborator. The classroom teacher, Thomas, and the student teacher, April Mason (pseudonym), both wrote journal entries each day reporting what they had especially noticed that day in the classroom, which was a fourth-grade class in a suburban school.

One major similarity between the inexperienced and experienced teacher's journal entries was that both teachers noticed particular children as especially salient. They repeatedly mentioned Liam, James, Andrew, Simone, and Rachel. These were the most troublesome children in the room. As Thomas put it in a report of the case study, these were children who "point themselves out" by their academic and social behavior.

The four beginning teachers we studied across their first year of teaching reported ways of seeing at the beginning of the year that resembled those of the student teacher near the end of her stint of student teaching. The beginning teachers also noticed group-level phenomena as well as the behavior of individual children, as the student teacher had begun to do by the end of the student teaching experience. Not only did the beginning teachers have a sense of the whole room, they also reported early on that they were attending to students' academic performance and to some aspects of curriculum. They found their sense of time for instruction to be undeveloped--some activities they planned would take much longer than expected and some would take much less.

In the period after Christmas the beginning teachers also looked at the classroom in terms of academic achievement by students. They seemed to lack a sense of the whole year, however, and were not sure whether they were behind where they should be or not. They also wondered about particular students. That wondering continued into the spring when they were confronting the problem of deciding which students if any to retain. Since they did not have previous years of experience they could not use a store of recollections as a backdrop against which to project their current problems and quandaries. Still the full year seems to have given them something, for at the end of the year the beginners reported that they understood much more than they had done at the beginning.

Throughout the year the beginning teachers were looking outside the classroom as well as inside it. They attended acutely at the beginning of the year to what fellow teachers and the principal said to them and about them. Later in the year the beginning teachers paid more and more attention to parents, especially as recurring difficulties with a few students had developed and as decisions about retention loomed ahead.

Since our data are cross-sectional rather than longitudinal we can only speculate about the actual process of acquisition of experienced ways of seeing. The undergraduate education majors seemed to have begun with a kind of split vision. In interviews they showed themselves adept at looking at individual children in detail, but sometimes also they would gloss the behavior of a child with a highly inferential global judgment. Their inferences did not appear to be grounded in connections of evidence, as did the inferences of the student teacher and the beginning teachers. Moreover, the undergraduates we interviewed did not seem to be aware of patterns at the group level. They lacked a sense of the whole classroom. Like the other novice teachers, however, the undergraduate majors were tentative about their conclusions. They were sometimes sure of what they were seeing but not of what to make of it, interpretively.

It appears that a sense of the room as a whole may develop during student teaching, as suggested by our case study. Certainly by the time of the first year of teaching the novice teachers we studied had a sense of group level phenomena in the classroom. Their sense of curricular time was still undeveloped, however. Perhaps this was because they had not spent much time in student teaching with full responsibility for instruction, and also because they had not experienced the full march through curricular time across the school year. This sense of the year as a whole may have provided the breadth of connections that enabled them to feel they knew better by spring how to plan their next fall than they had known during their first fall of teaching.

It might be that a sense of pedagogical commitments was developing, along with the explicitly reported confidence in one's abiltity to do the basic job--"I can do it!" One can speculate that the beginning teachers' ways of seeing at the beginning of the second fall of teaching would be more focused, with more connections being made, and that the ways of seeing would also be more fixed than in the first year. There would be fewer doubts about how to make sense of what was seen.

We were struck, in interviewing the beginning teachers, with something that can only be reported sketchily here because at this writing it is so partially understood. There was a sense that in the beginning of the fall the novice teachers thought they knew what they were doing, and knew what they needed to see in order to do it. Some of this may have been bravado but it seemed genuine. The beginners believed in certain entities they had learned about in their teacher education courses--student ability and grounds for grouping decisions based on it, children's self esteem and its behavioral indicators, teacher strategies for fostering extrinsic motivation, and certain aspects of planning. By winter the beginning teachers were much less sure of their knowledge and skill. Presumably their ways of seeing were more labile during that time. In the spring confidence in their own judgment was returning. In addition they seemed to have more of a sense of what the "it" was that they had begun to feel they knew how to do.

Throughout the year, however, there seemed to be little change in a basic conviction held by the beginning teachers. They did not doubt their fundamental perceptions. They believed that if they knew what to look for they knew how to see it. They appeared to be much less aware than were the researchers of the limits on human information processing. Seeing itself was not a problem; what sense to make of what was seen was sometimes the troubling quandary. This leads one to speculate that even in the troublesome times of the first winter the beginning teachers approached their work with epistemological optimism. The belief that we can see what needs to be seen may be necessary if practical, common sense reasoning is to be done at all, under conditions of information overload and uncertainty. Yet since the Greek philosophers first questioned the grounds of common sense knowledge such epistemological optimism has been considered unwarranted by scholars. The Greeks may or may not have been right, but given the long and distinguished history of epistemological skepticism it is striking that the beginning teachers we studied never reported doubting their own capacity for accurate and valid perception. The experienced teachers we studied did not doubt their perceptions either. Like the beginning teachers, the experienced ones often wondered what to do. Except for Mrs. Gates, they seemed not to have wondered about how to see and hear.

Chapter 9

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE WORK

This chapter discusses the implications of the findings for research and practice. Three aspects of implications for practice are considered: those regarding preservice teacher education, those regarding continuing education for experienced teachers, and those regarding organizational changes in schools that would affect the work life of teachers and would affect opportunities for their continuing education throughout the teaching career.

Frederick Erickson

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE WORK

Implications for Research

The greatest weakness in this study results from our inability, for logistical reasons, to follow undergraduates longitudinally through their university coursework and on through the first year of teaching. We are left with intriguing traces of evidence regarding the acquisition of professional ways of seeing and making sense, but what we can say about the process of acquisition itself is limited by the nature of our data.

Future research should check our assertions that novices begin by looking at classrooms in a fragmentary way, without a sense of the whole room or the whole year. Then, we think, during student teaching the novice begins to develop a sense of group level phenomena, interpreting the actions of individuals in terms of their place in the classroom as a whole. During the first year of teaching, we contend, beginning teachers develop a beginning sense of the year as a whole and consolidate their sense of the classroom as a whole. A sense of the year as a whole may not develop fully until during or even after the second year of teaching, since the capacity to look back at prior full years of teaching seems to have been so important to the experienced teachers in understanding where they were and why at any given point in the current year. The only way to test these assertions is by intense longitudinal study of a few individuals from their days in undergraduate school through two or three initial years of teaching. Such a study would be logistically difficult but scientifically worthwhile.

Further work could be done with beginning and experienced teachers that would test our claim that as the pedagogical commitments of the teachers become more developed and teachers become more confident in their ability to teach, their ways of seeing become more fixed, less open to the possibility of recognizing the contradictions in their working philosophy that might be revealed by paying attention to disconfirming evidence. We may be too pessimistic in our tentative conclusion that the experienced teachers' linked ways of seeing and pedagogical commitments constituted a self-sealing system no longer open to much learning.

We do not assume that critical reflection on one's philosophy of teaching and skepticism about the validity of one's immediate perceptions are unmixed blessings. For practical actors in the world there well may be necessary limits on cultural and epistemological relativism. We can know from personal experience that in some situations it is not the unexamined life but the examined life that is not worth living. Further research on alternation between critical reflection and intuitive action in teaching seems desirable. Some of this might be done with teachers whose work is especially exemplary. How reflective are the most masterful of teachers? How reflective are those that are average? How do we distinguish mastery from just being capable and experienced--do ways of seeing and making sense have anything to do with such a distinction? These are all questions for which further research is necessary.

A significant outcome of the research reported here is that it calls into serious question the validity of general description of teaching as a basis for general prescriptions about exemplary or effective practice. The tendency toward generalization in educational research looks misplaced when one reads the case studies presented in this report.

In this research nine teachers were studied in considerable depth. The case studies of them show repeatedly that for each of them their pedagogical perception and sense making was radically situational and contextually embedded. This is true to so extreme an extent in our findings that if they are valid it begins to seem meaningless to ask research questions such as "How does the teacher attend to and react to instances of bee stings?" or "How does the teacher make decisions about special education referral?" One can indeed find some general consistencies in the behavior of a teacher and find similarities in behavior across teachers. But these surface resemblances mask underlying differences of situated meaning across the instances that are being compared.

This insight points to what may be an important distinction between teachers' ways of viewing their own classrooms and external observers' ways of viewing them. The external observer, whether researcher, principal, or supervisory specialist, is as an intermittent visitor not privy to the depth and richness of contextual embedding--of local meaning--that is available to the classroom teacher. Even the incidents of two bee stings in our data corpus did not present the teacher with similar practical needs for attention and decision. In the one case the child had a medical record of allergy to bee stings. In the other case the other child did not have such a record, and so the teacher was less likely to be faced with an emergency medical situation. The two occasions of bee stings, even though they happened on the same day for the same teacher, were not instances of a generic type. Rather they were unique occasions for practical action.

It follows that it would be inappropriate to attempt to derive general prescriptions for practice ("What to Do with Bee Stings") from the analysis of multiple cases of bee stings because they are not instances of the same phenomenon. This suggests that the nouns and verbs used so glibly in the attempt by researchers to develop a language for the practice of teaching are not, in actual practice of teaching, labels for fixed semantic referents. Consider other terms besides bee sting: "cursive writing," "understanding place value," "low self-esteem," "planning," "trying hard." These words used in the practice of being a teacher or a student, our analysis implies, are cover terms for phenomena that are qualitatively different (i.e. fundamentally different) in each particular realization although they can also be seen to be analogous. Teachers, in making sense--that is, in constructing meaning--seem to recognize both the analogies among instances and the uniqueness of the single event. By handling generality and particularity simultaneously the teachers we studied were confounding the canons of normal science and of idealized accounts of rational decision-making. The teachers appeared to be rational but in a different mode from that of the practice of normal science. Rather than condemn the teacher for being irrational, or for lacking a language of practice and possessing uncodified knowledge, it would seem from our study that research on teaching needs to reconstrue its theories of practice to take account of the contextually embedded character of locally situated meaning. Further research and theory development on this topic seems warranted.

Finally, there is the question of the sources of pedagogical commitments. Where do they come from initially? How are they shaped in preservice teacher education? What is the influence on them of beginning full-time experience as a teacher and of cumulative experience across years of teaching? These are questions that go beyond the data base of our study. Perhaps one's pedagogical commitments are intuitively held from the beginning and change little over time. That possibility is suggested by the global inferences--highly categorical judgments--reported by the undergraduate education majors we studied. Without some implicit pedagogical theory they could not make such inferences.

Teacher education introduces new notions. Then by the end of the first year of teaching the beginning teachers we studied said they had begun to understand things much more than in the fall. Perhaps they were integrating various kinds of knowledge by a process of grounded theorizing. Since our study design precluded monitoring their first year of teaching by intensive participant observation we lack a full picture of the beginning teachers' acquisition of understanding. Further research could shed light on this.

Especially important, in retrospect, is the influence of the whole institution and general culture of pedagogy on beginning teachers. It seemed that messages about learning and teaching contained in the mandated curriculum materials and in routine practices and beliefs found in the school building and school system were influential in shaping the working philosophy of teaching of the experienced teachers. Mrs. Gates is an especially poignant case in that she continued to struggle over what she saw as contradictions between what "they" in the system wanted and what she thought the children needed.

This suggests a classic topic in the study of the sources of pedagogical commitments; the topic of ideology. Our analysis found that standard school materials and other standard school practices were ideological--they pointed to certain ways of understanding teaching and learning as certain truth. With the exception of Mrs. Gates and Mr. Fairley the experienced teachers we studied did not question those truths much. Neither did the beginning teachers we studied, except during a period of doubting themselves and their professional knowledge that seems to have developed right after the Christmas holidays--the time of year that one of the experienced teachers described as "the big push" in terms of the students' academic learning. It is not unreasonable not to doubt if one's surroundings do not encourage it; indeed if the ideological content of one's daily experience discourages critical reflection on standard operating procedures.

Further research here is necessary. Perhaps we missed some of the doubts held by the experienced teachers. Perhaps critical reflection develops in certain circumstances or at certain times in the school year. Little seems to be known on this issue regarding experienced teachers. It is intriguing to have found that for beginning teachers the first winter seems to be a period of doubt. More study of beginning and experienced teachers could shed light on this. The topic is significant not only scientifically but because of its policy implications for school reform and for initial and continuing teacher education. It is to those issues that we now turn.

Implications for Preservice Teacher Education

Because classroom meanings seem so contextually embedded and because teachers' ways of seeing and making sense seem so involved with a sense of the school year as a whole and of past years, it would seem that not much of what we have learned could be taught to undergraduates since they had not yet experienced a year of teaching. With this caveat in mind a few uses might be made of our findings at the preservice stage of teacher education.

Since a sense of the whole school year and of its various pedagogical seasons seemed so important to the early grades teachers we studied, perhaps this could be foreshadowed in the preservice education of teachers for the early grades. The undergraduate major cannot learn from direct experience about the full annual cycle of seasons of instruction but mention of this topic in courses could alert the beginner to watch for this during the first year of teaching. The most extreme version of this might be a set of methods courses, or topics within a methods course, organized according to the seasons of the school year. Thus one would take a course in methods for the period of the beginning of the school year through winter holiday, then one would take a course on main issues of method for the midwinter through early spring, and then a course covering early spring through the end of the school year. The beginning teachers we studied confronted connected sets of issues and the sets changed across seasons. Some reflection of this might well be desirable in the organization of university course work and also in the organization of field experiences with cooperating teachers.

A second implication for preservice teacher education concerns our findings regarding the relationship between doubt, pedagogical commitment, and ways of seeing. Our speculation is that with increasing years of experience in teaching and with the development of more and more complete working philosophies of practice, the ways of seeing of teachers become increasingly fixed. This lack of flexibility in perspective may reduce stress, but it can be maladaptive if, for example, a particular combination of pedagogical commitments and ways of seeing leads a teacher systematically to underestimate the potential of Hispanic male students in the classroom. This could happen if the teachers' ways of seeing were patterned in such ways that he or she continually missed noticing fleeting behavioral evidence of motivation or special competence among the Hispanic male students in the room.

As a measure of prevention for rapid development of inflexible ways of seeing by beginning teachers, perhaps preservice education could identify this as a problem and then encourage critical reflection of their own ways of seeing by undergraduate education majors. If we are correct in our supposition that what one comes to see as a teacher is related to one's pedagogical commitments, then one aspect of teacher education should include experience and guidance in scrutinizing one's own implicit and explicit pedagogical beliefs. Some programs of teacher education do this. In others there may be a tendency to encourage "conversion" as a true believer in a particular pedagogical creed rather than to foster pedagogical doubt and skepticism in prospective teachers.

This is a difficult prescription to enjoin, since it is uncomfortable to doubt and there may be limits to its usefulness in practice. Still the potential benefits to teachers in being able to look at their classrooms from a variety of perceptual and normative vantage points rather than from a single perspective alone seem to warrant some attempts to foster in prospective teachers habits of mind and perspectives that will prepare them for critical and multidimensional scrutiny of practice once they begin to teach. Our findings may suggest that the systematic cultivation of doubt has been too long absent from the education of teachers, whether at the preservice stage or in later continuing education.

Implications for the First Year of Teaching

The teachers we studied seemed sure of their perceptions throughout the year but became less and less sure they knew what actions to take pedagogically as the time of winter holiday arrived and passed. Mentorship by an experienced teacher or by a university-based supervisor seems to be called for. If a relationship of trust were established at the beginning of the school year, the mentor could be of considerable assistance as the beginning teacher's winter season of doubt developed. If doubt about one's pedagogical commitments is not so much a problem as it is an opportunity for growth in the capacity for flexible perception and critical learning within the midst of practice, then the season of the beginning teachers' doubt could be seen by the mentor (and by the administrators and colleagues of the beginning teacher) as a crucial developmental period in learning to teach.

Mentors for beginning teachers would themselves need the capacity for flexible perception and critical reflection on practice that they were attempting to foster in the neophyte. Here a paradox emerges. If our findings are correct, teachers become less flexible and critical with years of experience. Yet the mentors of beginning teachers would most likely be experienced teachers and administrators. These are the very people who would have become a bit blind to their own ways of seeing, given the ideological press in everyday school life that seems to discourage deep levels of self criticism and institutional criticism.

Mentors would need to have become capable of critical reflection on their own practice. This would involve becoming aware of their own pedagogical commitments. An interesting finding from our focused group interviews with the teachers is relevant here. When the experienced and beginning teachers first watched the videotape of a teacher from Boston whose pedagogical commitments and teaching style differed from their own, the reactions of the teachers to the videotape seemed quasi-personal. It was as if each teacher were saying to him or herself "What would I do with those kids? What would I do with this lesson? Why doesn't she close the door and tell the kids across the room to shut up? That's what I'd do first." This was a personalistic kind of seeing through the lens of a set of pedagogical beliefs that appear to have been deeply held emotionally. One wonders if that is not what happens when mentors, supervisors, or evaluators visit a teacher's classroom. Perhaps one of the reasons that observational checklists are popular for such observations is that the checklist puts a brake on what otherwise in the absence of special training and insight might be quite egocentric and arbitrary perception of the teacher by the observer.

A message to mentors and other observers of teachers, then, could be "Know thyself." Perhaps new kinds of training are necessary for supervisors if supervision is not simply to recycle the status quo of pedagogical commitments and ways of seeing from one generation of experienced teachers to the next. With the advent of increased numbers of beginning teachers entering the work force of schools in the next years, this point may have significant importance for policy in staff development and in the conduct of school administration, especially at the level of the building principal.

Implications for Experienced Teachers

From the point of view suggested by our findings the professional with years of experience is in a special circumstance for continuing education. The experienced teacher has a backdrop of recollections from years of experience and has developed an integrated set of pedagogical commitments and a set of highly strategic ways of seeing and making sense in the midst of practice. If our analysis is correct the experienced teacher is also likely to be quite deeply attached emotionally to the pedagogical commitments he or she has developed. The experienced teacher is also likely to overlook, in nonrandom ways, certain kinds of observational evidence that is available while teaching and to concentrate on other kinds of evidence. Perhaps for some experienced teachers the very coherence and analytic power of their developed ways of seeing and making sense make their perception and judgment quite narrow and unidimensional.

This could explain why teachers are able to assimilate discrete techniques learned in short-term inservice training without changing their overall way of teaching. Our study suggests that continuing education for experienced teachers needs to be long term and to engage the teacher in depth. University based consultants, school system based supervisors and principals, and teachers working together as peers can help one another to become more aware of their ways of seeing and making sense in order to develop a wider repertoire of perceptions and insights as a teacher. But the contextual embedding of meaning is so powerful and the ways of seeing of a teacher are so personal that one needs to take a custom tailored approach to staff development that addresses teachers' intuitive observation and decision-making. Working as a consultant with the teacher the facilitator can address directly the issue of teachers' immediate perceptions and the relation of those ways of seeing to the teachers' implicit and explicit pedagogical commitments. The teacher learns to begin to look in new times and places during the classroom day for a wider range of evidence regarding the abilities and interests of students. As the teacher tries to change instruction in small ways, pedagogical commitments and ways of seeing also begin to change. The results are a sense of empowerment on the part of the teacher and greater learning by students.

This approach to staff development is currently being piloted in a new project of the Institute for Research on Teaching titled formally Teachers' Conceptual Change in Practice. That project began in the winter of 1985 and continues as of this writing. For further information the reader is referred to the progress reports and working papers from that project and to the IRT's Communication Quarterly (Volume 8, No.3, Spring/Summer 1986) in which progress to date is briefly described. Some aspects of the early stages of the project are also described in Erickson, 1986. After a year and half we are beginning to learn how and why this new mode of continuing education for teachers stimulates fundamental change in teachers' pedagogical commitments and practice.

Implications for Institutional Change

If beginning teachers were to receive sustained mentorship during their first years of teaching and if experienced teachers were to undertake sustained efforts at professional growth of the kinds we have outlined here, some basic changes in the organizational character of schools would need to change. This point is reflected in the informal title of the Teachers' Conceptual Change in Practice project of the IRT; a title that developed because neither the school staff nor the university-based researchers collaborating in the project felt content with the tone of the project's formal title. The informal title we devised is "Teacher Development and Organizational Change."

To support teachers in deliberately developing capacities for self-criticism and institutional criticism requires change in role relationships among fellow teachers and between teachers and administrators. Such changes in role constitute fundamental institutional change within the school as a formal organization.

Another institutional change involves the allocation of educational resources in continuing education for teachers. For the sort of work we have been undertaking released time for teachers is necessary. In our particular project the costs of that have been shared between the university and the school district. That partnership between the university and a local school building is but one of the possible means by which increased time for continuing education of teachers might be made available. Such time is not cheap but it may be essential. It appears that time is one of the key elements in helping teachers to entertain doubts and cultivate new insights and skills in the practice of teaching.

Conclusion

Teachers make sense. They see from within the action of teaching what they think they need to see in getting the job done. Their conceptions of what the job is and ought to be are influenced in no small part by the implicit and explicit definitions of what is real and desirable that are current in the school in which they teach, as well as by their own personal proclivities. This is a folk ontology, an ideology of practice, that exists in a relation between what is outside them as objective and external shaping forces and inside them as subjectively apprehended beliefs and emotions. At the individual level this ideology of practice is manifested in a set of pedagogical commitments and a set of individually distinctive ways of seeing and making sense as a teacher. Those ways of seeing develop over time and become so taken for granted as to be invisible to the perceiver. The ways of seeing and the pedagogical commitments of beginning and experienced teachers can and do change, but not without considerable effort and not without the pain that comes in rethinking what one already knows.

In concluding we are reminded of the joke about the psychiatrist:

Q: How many psychiatrists does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Only one, but it takes time, and the light bulb has to really want to change.

REFERENCE

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